By the same Author

THE PRINCES OF INDIA

INDIA'S NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

BY

SIR WILLIAM BARTON

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PREFACE BY
THE MARQUESS OF WILLINGDON,
G C S I., G C M.G , G C I.E.

SO many more people now take an active interest in Indian affairs than was the case in years gone by, so many want to learn more of the administrative difficulties that we British have encountered in India since our Government took over the control of the country after the quelling of the Indian Mutiny, that I can strongly recommend a study of this volume which in comparatively few pages gives a clear, concise and most charming description of the history of the North-West Frontier Province, of the characteristics of the people both in the Tribal areas and the settled districts, and of the general work and conditions of life of the political and military officers, whose duty takes them to that important frontier of the Empire

It is a further privilege to commend a book written by an old personal friend with whom I served in India, and who spent some nineteen years of his political service in various parts of the Frontier Province and speaks from an intimate knowledge of the difficulties of the life of an administrator there

Sir William Barton has given us a clear description of the discussions and differences of opinion there have been in the past between the forward and backward policy with regard to the Frontier, and the difficulties connected with the Durand Line, and he

has been throughout his book delightfully frank in his criticism of the policy of the Government of India from time to time He refers to certain happenings that occurred during my Viceroyalty, principally connected with the Red Shirt movement and the outbreak among the upper Mohmands during my period of office, and of the road we built up the Gandab Valley and over the Natakki Pass And, as one who has been fortunate in his life in reaching that amazingly fascinating part of India on several occasions, I am clear that our policy of gradual and peaceful penetration into those areas, which are still shut off from our approach, should steadily continue in order that we may help these fine people to become more humanized and civilized, and by improving their economic condition to make them turn to more peaceful occupations than those of constant strife and struggle There are good men and true in the Services who are ceaselessly working to strive to this end, and while much has already been done there is much still to do

Above all we should continue to work in the closest co-operation with the Government of Afghanistan, of whose friendly relations with the Government of India I have the happiest recollections And while it may take long years to produce results, the effort is well worth while and I look forward in the future to the time when the tribesmen of the North-West Frontier will become peaceful, law-abiding subjects of our King Emperor and trusted fellow-citizens of our Empire

W

January, 1939

Glossary of Vernacular Terms

Barampta	Reprisals by seizure of property or members of an offending tribe
Bandish	Blockade
Burqa	A white enveloping garment worn by pardah women
Badragga	Safe conduct escort
Firingee	European
Hijrat	Migration of Moslems from a Kafir country to a kingdom of Islam
Hamsayah	(Living in the same shade) Client, dependent of a border Khan or Chief
Jihad	Holy War
Jezail	Old-fashioned muzzle-loading musket
Jirgah	Tribal council or jury
Kashar	Junior tribesmen
Khilafat or Caliphate	Religious leadership of Islam The Sultan of Turkey was regarded as the religious leader of the Moslem world until the abolition of the Khilafat by the Turkish dictator, Kemal Ataturk
Lashkar	Tribal force
Mujahidin	Fighters in a Holy War
Mullah	Tribal Moslem priest
Malik	Tribal headman
Pakhtunwali	Code of law and customs of the Pathan
Shiah	A Moslem sect who regard Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet, as his true successor (Khalifa), rejecting the first two Khalifs
Talib-ul-ilm	Seeker after knowledge Moslem theological students attached to the mosques of religious leaders
Tangi	A gorge or defile
Yagistan	"Independent" tribal territory

Chapter I

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AFGHAN BORDERLAND AND OF THE PROBLEM OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

THE Moslem world in the Great War was unconcerned in the struggle for hegemony among the great nations of Europe Nevertheless, of the three hundred millions professing the faith of Islam, nearly half were compelled to range themselves on one side or the other Turkey, the one great Moslem world power, which could have kept aloof had it chosen, under the sinister influence of Enver Bey threw in its lot with the Central Powers With the Allies stood the satellite sultanates of Morocco and Egypt, the seventy millions of Indian Moslems had perforce to espouse the cause of the British Empire, many of them with extreme reluctance after the Turks had elected to fight their old friend and former ally The rebel Sharif of Mecca with the Arabs of the Hedjaz fought for the Allies, the Amir of Afghanistan, though unable to prevent an unofficial *jihad* or two on the Indian frontier by his border tribes, held firmly to his treaty obligations and countered the desperate efforts made by Turkish and German emissaries to stir up the fanaticism of the Moslems of the Border and of the Panjab to the point of rebellion against the rulers of India Had these efforts succeeded the British would have been com-

pelled to divert large forces from Mesopotamia and Palestine and possibly from the Western Front to India, involving perhaps serious consequences in the depleted areas Persia remained neutral, but in consequence of German and Turkish intrigues in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier, became almost a battleground between the rival governments The Russian Moslems of the Caucasus and the Central Asian Khanates were involved only up to the time of the downfall of Russian Tsardom

The end of the war saw the complete collapse of Turkey Persia, weak and irresolute, had lost faith in her destiny, it seemed probable that she might have to accept a British protectorate The new Amir of Afghanistan, reversing the policy of his murdered father, had challenged the might of Britain and suffered ignominious defeat, had the British government chosen they had every justification for breaking up the Afghan kingdom The Arab leader Faisal, despite his services to the allied cause, had been roughly expelled from Damascus by the French, shattering his dream of founding an Arab kingdom in Syria, the Allies refused to recognize the unity of the Arab peoples The Moslem world in a quarrel not its own had sustained injuries which seemed to threaten its international status

In an incredibly short space of time the scene had changed A brilliant Turkish soldier, Mustafa Kemal, had driven the Greeks out of Anatolia and laid the foundations of a new and more virile Turkey, Britain held her hand on the Afghan border and conceded to Afghanistan its independence Ibn Saud, the soldier-king of Nejd, had wrested the Hedjaz from

the feeble hands of the Sharif, taken possession of the holy cities, and set up a strong Arab State, Iraq had become a kingdom under British mandate with the promise of a splendid future, as in Turkey, an able Persian general, Reza Shah, had given his country a new lease of vigorous life In India the Moslems in the Khilafat movement had allied themselves with the Hindu Congress and were challenging the basis of British power From the Indian border to the Red Sea Islam had emerged strong and self-reliant from a great ordeal

The next ten years saw further progress in Persia, Turkey, Arabia and Egypt Kabul, under the influence of its neighbours, put off its exclusiveness, sent its ambassadors and envoys abroad, admitted foreign legations, opened up the country with roads A pact or treaty now unites the independent Moslem powers of Asia

Islam is once again a world force to be reckoned with This metamorphosis has not made easier British activities on the Afghan frontier, where the British authorities in 1920 were heavily involved in border troubles with the Pathan tribes on the Indian side of the political frontier (the Durand line) There can be no doubt that the lenient treatment accorded by the British to the Amir, after his unprovoked attack on India had been repelled, led the insurgent tribes who had joined him, to imagine that the British hold on the Frontier was weakening They still hoped that Kabul would once again send forth the fiery cross The defeat of the Greeks by fellow Moslems gave them fresh stimulus, it seemed that Allah was fighting for his own No wonder

that it took several years to restore comparative peace to a harassed borderland

A perennial difficulty of border administration is that between the political boundary and the Indus is a tract of country 40,000 square miles in area, which, although ethnographically and geographically part of the heritage of Afghan nationalism, lies within the Indian Empire The vast majority of the population is Pathan, in point of fact the Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province number about five and a half millions as compared with some seven and a half millions in the Afghan kingdom For nearly a century in the first youth of Afghan nationalism (from about the middle of the eighteenth century) the border country had been included in the boundaries of the Afghan kingdom The political aspirations of the Pathans of the North-West Frontier —one might almost term the country Afghanistan *irredenta*—are towards Kabul The British government has here to deal with the problem of a political minority which it has hitherto found impossible to assimilate into India How the position developed and its consequences will be explained in a later chapter

A huge mountain mass buttressing the Afghan highlands for hundreds of miles, held and owned by a race as hard and ruthless as its peaks and precipices—here is the one great Imperial land frontier of Britain For a century she has tried to forget it, only to be reminded tragically at frequent intervals of her responsibility, when war-clouds gather on the Afghan horizon and British and Indian lives are sacrificed to the implacable hostility of Afghan tribesmen towards India and her rulers

"The North-West Frontier is not only the frontier of India, it is an international frontier of the first importance from the military point of view for the

ing this they could apply pressure, military and economic, from both sides of the mountain zone, an almost essential requirement for bringing the wild independence of these hill tribes within the pale of the law.

The Indo-Afghan boundary (the Durand line) settled by agreement between the Afghan and British Governments in 1894, now divides tribal loyalty between Kabul and Delhi Of such loyalty to either government there is very little evidence To the fanatical tribesmen militant Islam is the greater loyalty, any kind of control even from Kabul is hateful to them They will fight the infidel for the Amir, but object to paying taxes or admitting Afghan officials to interfere in tribal life To the British government the attitude of the tribes, who owe it allegiance under a boundary agreement to which they were not parties, is one of doubtful neutrality, when not actually hostile At any moment a tribe with an imaginary grievance may force on a major campaign, as in Waziristan last year

The civilizing of these six or seven millions of Pathans in the tribal zone is the joint problem of Kabul and Delhi It can hardly be done in isolation, especially in view of the strategical defects in the Durand line, which make military control of the tribes difficult These defects will be discussed later

The position is anomalous Britain so far has found it impossible to absorb the Pathan into the Indian Empire, on their side the Afghan government are faced with almost equal difficulties in civilizing their own border tribes, left more or less in the air by the Durand line, to say nothing of the

permanent weakening of the Afghan kingdom from the loss of its rich Indus valley provinces and their strong Afghan element

It is obvious that if the frontier problem is to be settled Briton and Afghan must work in co-operation As will appear in its appropriate place there has been very little attempt at joint action For a hundred years the Afghans have regarded Britain with suspicion, on their part the British have placed little faith in the good intentions of the Afghan The future holds promise of better things and the time now seems propitious for the closer *rapprochement* of the two powers interested in the problem of the Afghan border.

Shorn of the Indus valley and its mountainous hinterland as far as the Durand line, with the five millions of Pathans inhabiting that territory, Afghanistan is still a powerful kingdom with great potentialities for development It has an area of 270,000 square miles, one and a half times the size of Germany Most of this is, however, mountainous, the culturable area is only about one-fourth of the whole There are, it is believed, valuable mineral resources, also oil The population is roughly twelve millions, of whom 60 per cent, about seven and a quarter millions, are Afghans The rest is a mixture of races, people with Persian affinities (Tajiks) around Herat and Kandahar, Turkish, Usbeg and Turkoman in the Oxus valley, beyond the Hindu Kush, the ethnographical boundary on the north of the Afghan people Between Ghazni and Kandahar are the Hazaras, a Mongoloid people speaking the Persian language and professing the Shiah form of

Islam Afghanistan has, indeed, because of the diversity of its people, been compared not inaptly to pre-War Austro-Hungary The country is land-locked as a result of the British appropriation in 1876 of the maritime province of Baluchistan in southern Afghanistan, when they induced the Khan of Kelat, till then a feudatory of Kabul, to transfer his allegiance to the Indian Empire Quetta was a little later occupied as a military station This policy not only cut off the access of Afghanistan to the sea, which was naturally an obstacle to progress, it went still further and in the words of the great Amir Abdurrahman it pointed a pistol at the heart of his country

The North-West Frontier extends from the Sulaiman mountains and the Gumal pass in the south to Chitral and the Pamirs on the north The British tribal zone lies between the administrative boundary (the foothills) and the Durand line, as far as Kashmir, after which the Kashmir State is the eastern boundary The width of this strip of territory averages fifty miles Its area is roughly 25,000 square miles, its population three millions, of which nearly half a million are first-class fighting men The King-Emperor's writ does not run in this tribal hinterland, British influence so far has done little to curb the wild freedom of the hills

The distinction between the terms "Pathan" and "Afghan" is not of real importance The tribes on both sides of the mountain belt describe themselves as "Pathan" or "*Pukhtun*" There is, however, a tendency to refer to Pathans under Kabul jurisdiction as Afghans, tribesmen on the British

side rarely use the term The language on both sides of the line is Pushtu, a dialect of eastern Persia The origin of the tribes is doubtful Legend connects them with the lost tribes of Israel, there is nothing to support the theory beyond a Semitic type of feature in some of the clans On the other hand most of them show decidedly Aryan characteristics Pathans, especially the hill tribes, are fair-skinned with an ivory complexion, their features are well-shaped, good looks are common Their intelligence is much higher than that of the general run of Indian peasantry

It is hardly possible to produce with a few bold strokes a sketch of Pathan character that would hold good for the mosaic of clans from the Indus to the Persian border, from the Hindu Kush to Baluchistan Much depends on education and economic progress There is, for example, a vast difference between the mental and moral outlook of a rich young Khan from Peshawar, educated in England, who, on a visit to London, might give you an elaborate lunch at the Savoy, and an odoriferous Wazir lazily making his way from Birmal in the Amir's country, to the Kurram valley with his sheep and camels The Wazir would cut your throat with a blunt knife as soon as look at you, repeating as he did it the formula of the Qurān "in the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful" The Khan may not like his English guest politically, he might criticize the social exclusiveness of the Englishman, but the murderous instincts of his race have been atrophied by education and contact with civilized life

The psychology of the Pathan of the so-called independent tribal areas is of a stronger fabric than that of the Pathan of the plains for eighty years confined in the framework of the civilized administration of British India The rudimentary self-government that prevails across the border develops self-reliance, courage, resource, sobriety, a Spartan outlook The rivalry of faction and party in the tribal councils sharpens the wits, contact with British officers, service in the army or irregular corps work in the same direction There is no caste in border society, every Pathan thinks himself as good as another In fact the political climate of the Frontier is healthier for the delicate plant of democracy than anywhere else in India

Consider the case of a small boy brought up in a fortified homestead in, for example, a remote glen in Tirah (Afridi country) From his earliest infancy he is taught to regard his neighbour with extreme suspicion, if not hatred, probably he shares a blood feud with the boy's family A stranger is to be regarded as an enemy till the contrary is proved Kinship does not always connote friendship, the word for "cousin" (*tarbur*) also means an enemy The stern religion of Islam which, as interpreted to border folk, knows no charity, does nothing to soften the youthful temper A child in conditions such as these learns little of the outside world; he receives no education The infidel government of India is held up to scorn, that of Kabul is praised as a citadel of true belief Pride of race, contempt for the Hindu and lesser breeds, are instilled in the young Pathan almost from his cradle Until at fourteen

or fifteen years of age he carries a rifle and attends tribal councils he rarely meets anyone except members of his family and perhaps a client outlaw or two under his father's protection

Despite his bucolic upbringing the young Pathan when he goes into the world clothes himself in arrogance Meet him in the street in Bombay or Calcutta, and he will spit raucously at the sight of the Kafir Firingee He makes no distinction of persons and is not awed in the presence of high authority It is a point of honour with him to refrain from expressing wonderment or admiration at any of the ingenuities of the civilization of the west Not easy material to work up into good citizenship of the Indian Empire!

Contrast again this kind of life in a border fort with the more or less sophisticated life of a young Pathan of a well-to-do yeoman family in a village near enough Peshawar city to make daily attendance at a British Mission school possible The family will send its sons to the school and give them an English education, perhaps sending them later on to the Islamiah College near the Khyber Pass, for a university education, in the hope that a university degree will open the way to government service or to practice at the Bar A boy in such conditions comes in contact with various aspects of civilization. the newspaper, the cinema. wireless. the motor-car. Indian politics would enter into the mentality of such a family · some of them might respect and like individual Englishmen but not the British government for truckling to the Hindu. Deep down in the subconscious would be a feeling that the

British Empire must soon collapse and in its place the Durani Empire from Persia to Lahore rise again from its ashes Nevertheless there is something in common between the two races and though Pathan loyalty to the British raj has not been equal to severe strain many Pathans have proved staunch in the face of danger Take, for example, the defence of the Landi Kotal fort at the head of the Khyber by the Afridis of the Khyber Rifles in 1897, when their British officers had been withdrawn and the Pass closed, " a day of pain, shame, grief and humiliation for every Englishman in India," as a high British officer described it in a lecture on the Frontier before the Viceroy and Simla society in the following year There are some who think that their British officers might have held the Khyber Rifles in 1919 if they had been allowed to Tribal levies have on several occasions of late years shown their loyalty by attacking raiders, shooting down tribesmen found cutting telegraph wires or damaging the roads Much depends on the character of the British officers with whom the Pathan comes into contact He adores force , he will give a qualified loyalty in normal times to a British government that is prepared to show strength , for a Congress government proclaiming non-violence as its political creed he would cherish an amused contempt

Does it not seem futile to expect that men bred in a frontier environment, even with the advantages of education, will work with Britain to transmute the wild freedom of the hills into ordered democracy ? And can one expect the border Pathan to exchange his tribal republic for a few seats in a frontier parlia-

ment? It seems unlikely except as a result of a determined policy of pacification including disarmament

An analysis of Pathan mentality must take account of the patriotism which in the last century and a half has developed a consciousness of separate political interest This feeling doubtless is stronger in the tribes under Afghan rule, but it is shared by the tribes in the British tribal hinterland and there can be no doubt that the Pathan of the administered areas is not prepared to throw in his lot with India except on terms that would preserve the identity of his people as a nation apart from the people of India Here it may be observed that there is among the Moslems of the Panjab a tendency to support a scheme for a separate Moslem State in the north to be styled Pakistan (the land of the pure in heart), which would include most of the Panjab, the Frontier Province and Kashmir, whose population is predominantly Moslem If such a State were formed it is more than likely that in the end it would be united to Afghanistan

A fact that is often overlooked in considering Pathan psychology is that the Pathans, of all the peoples included in Indian polity, are the last to have built up a great empire, an empire that included the Panjab, Kashmir, Sindh, Baluchistan and the Afghan highlands to the Persian border The Afghan invaders of India in 1762 smashed to pieces at Panipat the Maratha confederacy, thereby destroying the Maratha hope of building a Hindu empire on the ruins of the empire of the Mughals It is true that the Sikhs won back most of the Panjab

and held for a few years part of the Afghan border on a precarious tenure; they would never have been able to cross the Indus but for the internecine struggles of rival claimants to the Afghan throne.

Afghan predominance on the Indian borderland was first established two centuries ago. Throughout, the Afghan régime has been characterized by instability. The political pattern that developed was a curious admixture of despotic rule, feudalism and tribal republicanism. Most of what is now Afghanistan was till recent times administered by tribal chiefs, Usbegs, Afghans, Hazaras, pledged to provide troops when required by the central government. It was the practice of the Amirs to give provincial governorships to their sons who, utilizing their opportunities of attaching feudal chiefs to their persons, almost invariably fought among themselves for the throne of Kabul on the death of the ruling prince. These wars of succession led to anarchy, the effect of which it took years to eradicate. They account to a large degree for the loss of the Indian possessions of the Durani Empire.

Amir Abdurrahman Khan (1880–1901) claimed to have broken down the feudal system and established a form of regular administration in its place. This was certainly not the case in the tribal zone. The Amir wisely kept his sons in Kabul, giving the eldest, Habibullah, a careful training in administration, with the result that he succeeded to the throne on his father's death without opposition.

Khanates like Dir, Amb and Nawagai, in the Malakand agency in the hills north of Peshawar, reproduce to some extent, and of course compara-

tively in miniature, the political system of Afghanistan before the reforms of Abdurrahman There is a small area under despotic rule, several small fiefs held by dependent Khans and outside these, tribal republics over which the Nawabs of Dir, Amb etc, exercise a loose suzerainty, claiming from them tribute and military aid in the shape of tribal *lashkars* in times of trouble

The tribal republic on the Afghan Frontier is an interesting institution from a political point of view, if indeed anything so inchoate and amorphous can be described as an institution The border tribes have been left practically unmolested in their remote glens and fastnesses for at least three hundred years; great empires and kingdoms with which they have come into contact, the Mughal, Durani, British have made no sustained effort to subdue them As already observed the Pathans are a gifted people, brave, intelligent, self-reliant, they have a strong sense of nationalism, they practise a world religion of great renown every man is a soldier ready at any moment to answer the call to arms in defence of his homeland Despite these civic virtues they have evolved nothing in the nature of a central authority, no real form of self-government The non-existence of such an institution is one of the root causes of the intractability of the Frontier problem

In many respects this Pathan or Afghan republic may be compared with the city state of ancient times from which the Roman republic was evolved At the outset Rome was a community of peasant farmers, as the Pathans are to-day Sovereignty lay with the whole tribal body, which prescribed the

laws and appointed the magistrates, no citizen except when he held office enjoyed privilege or authority beyond his fellows. The stability of the system owed much to a disciplined family life, in the early days the commonwealth mirrored the ordered scheme of family relations based on the *patria potestas* Every member of the commonwealth was a soldier and lawgiver, every member might aspire to a magistracy or to leadership in the field

The Pathans' tribal republic rests on a similar basis There is in most cases complete equality among the tribesmen In fact so much emphasis has been placed on the principle that in many tribes until quite recently it was the custom (known as *wesh*) to redistribute the tribal lands at intervals of thirty years with the object not only of securing tribal cohesion, but of preventing any tribesman from exploiting his neighbours As regards law-giving, *pukhtun-wali*, the law of the border, is the tribal and personal law of the community and governs the relations of tribesmen *inter se* and of one tribe with the other In theory the system of tribal law is complete, there is no law-making In case of doubt it is purely a question of interpretation In inter-tribal disputes or in disputes between sections of a tribe or individuals, if the quarrel is not settled by the bullet, a tribal *jirgah*, or council, which may consist of the whole tribal body, gets together and with perhaps the aid of the mullah prescribes the law There is no authority to enforce tribal decisions except the tribal *lashkar* and the extreme course of assembling the *lashkar* for such a purpose is a difficult proceeding, very rarely adopted.

Family life bears some resemblance to the Roman model. The head of the household, so far as the family is concerned, is a law unto himself. He is subject to no limitation. He can [illegible] but his wife is [illegible] and [illegible] daughter with a daughter's [illegible] Women enter the [illegible] than [illegible] or [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

is the contempt of the whole tribe and social ostracism

Most tribes are honeycombed with feud and faction which necessarily impedes social intercourse and has unquestionably been a factor working against the evolution of an effective tribal government There are no magistrates or administrators elected or otherwise Most tribes, it is true, recognize certain groups of *maliks* (headmen) and elders as representatives of the tribe in dealing with tribal questions , they are not, however, invested with authority in any form Real authority rests with the whole body of tribesmen, and the agreements or decisions reached by the *maliks* are frequently repudiated by the junior members of the tribe Islam is a unifying force all along the border Unfortunately the mullahs or priests frequently use their influence against, instead of with, the tribal council, when, for example, they choose to consider that the *maliks* are going too far in promoting a *rapprochement* with the British government It often happens that they raise *lashkars* and perhaps besiege and burn the forts of *maliks* whom they think too closely identified with the interests of the suzerain power Where the tribal council is strong, if for example the leading *maliks* are influential as a result of possessing greater wealth in lands, cattle, with an establishment including a few outlaws and armed retainers, the tribesmen are more likely to abide by the council's decision

It will be seen that the points of resemblance to the primitive republics of the Roman type disappear when the question of organized government is con-

sidered The tribesman is still a law unto himself except where the wider interests of the tribe are involved It is rarely possible to get the tribesmen to act together No wonder that in the prevailing anarchy economic development has been retarded, that no system of education exists, that there is no sort of culture in the ordinary sense In some tribes now that the long-range rifle is so common it is very difficult for the farmer to cultivate his fields if he is involved in a blood feud The poverty and lack of remunerative occupations that result account to a great extent for tribal unrest

The impact of the British government on the border tribes has not had the effect of modifying to any extent tribal life and polity Attempts have been made from time to time to set up some form of tribal authority, e g among the Mahsuds, but without success Without it the border problem can never be solved The possibility of evolving some form of tribal government that might be able to ensure a measure of stability in tribal life and guarantee the good behaviour of the tribesmen will be examined in a later chapter

Tribal territory, Yagistan, or the country of the independent tribes, as it is often termed, between the British administrative border and the Durand line, is in political theory a British protectorate It has not been annexed , the tribes have not accepted our rule Their status internationally is that of British protected subjects , they are entitled to British protection in foreign countries , the British government would ordinarily protect them against attack from the other side of the political boundary

On the other hand the British government is responsible for preventing them from interfering in Afghanistan In many cases they have agreed to allow roads to be constructed through their country, they accept allowances for protecting roads and passes, and for service in other forms Many of them would not admit that the British had any right to control their actions across the Durand line For example, it was only by the application of heavy pressure, involving military movements at considerable expense, that of recent years the British authorities have been able to prevent Wazirs and Mahsuds interfering in dynastic quarrels in Afghanistan

Reference may be made at this stage to the annual migration of tribesmen to India both from Afghanistan and from the British tribal hinterland in the cold weather months, a matter of considerable importance both from the political and economic standpoint From one end of the border to the other tribesmen move down in considerable numbers to India to work in the plains or to graze their flocks and herds Work on the roads, building work in towns and villages, field work, is the kind of employment most in vogue You will find Bajauris and Swatis in the Peshawar villages, Orakzais from Tirah in Kohat and Jurram, Afridis from Tirah bring down their cattle into the Khajuri plain in Peshawar; Wazirs from the high ranges move with their cattle, sheep and camels into the Tochi and Bannu as do the Bhittannis into the Dera Ismail Khan district, where in the winter Mahsuds are generally to be found in considerable numbers This economic dependence of the hill people on the

plains gives Government a weapon with which to exercise some measure of control A blockade can be declared against an offending tribe and its members excluded from British territory which means economic hardship ; a still more effective method of reprisal is the seizure of members of a tribe involved in difficulties with Government, if, knowing the Government might take action against them, they nevertheless venture into the plains

For hundreds of years the great clans of warrior merchants, Ghilzais, Powindahs, Kharotis, from central Afghanistan, have moved their caravans down the passes into India to trade and to graze their camels and cattle Their chief idea is to make money They hold themselves aloof from border politics as far as possible They pay taxes to the Kabul government, tolls, grazing tax, land tax, but otherwise avoid Afghan officialdom, settling their own disputes, quarrels In fact they are more or less self-contained units, republican in character like the border tribes For nearly half the year they live under British protection without owing allegiance to the British government Till the British occupied the Gumal, Tochi and Kurram valleys and the Khyber Pass they had to fight their way through the hills or pay heavy blackmail to the tribes in the neighbourhood They now pay only grazing dues and tolls to the British government On entering British territory they are deprived of their arms which are deposited in the nearest police station till their return to Afghanistan In the plains country of Dera Ismail Khan, in the Kurram valley and elsewhere, they construct large zaribas of thorns

inside which are pitched their black camel hair tents, huge savage dogs guard the enclosures Here they leave their womenfolk, children and old men, while the younger men take their camels and merchandise to trade in the Panjab Their wares consist mostly of carpets, felt rugs, dried fruits, fresh grapes in boxes, lambskins On their return journey to Afghanistan they take up textiles, salt, tea, hardware

Apart from these nomad traders there are many other tribesmen not of the nomad class who leave their homes in Afghanistan in the winter for the Indian plains Many of them come from Khost (the Afghan province of the Kurram and Waziristan border), Jajjis, Jadrans, Mangals, etc, poor folk who load up their bedding and cooking utensils on donkeys and take their families along with them to India The trading instinct is still strong in some of the settled clans of the Dera Ismail Khan district and the adjacent hills These people like the Ghilzais go to Bengal in the winter and hawk cloth round the villages The Kabúli, as he is usually called, is a terror to the Bengali peasant, who is almost compelled to buy his goods and later terrorized into paying twice their value The Pathan still takes toll of India [1]

The power to close the passes and either to prevent the nomads from going up to Afghanistan or entering India is of some diplomatic value to Britain The migrants form a considerable proportion of the Afghan population and in either case heavy pressure would be brought to bear on the Afghan authorities by interested parties in order to induce them to compose any differences they might have with the

British government Moreover the enterprise of the nomad traders brings money into the country and provides a source of revenue which the Afghan government cannot afford to forgo

For nearly a century and a half the British government has been in relations with Kabul and for over a century with the Afghan borderland For ninety years they have held the North-West Frontier And yet despite the fact that they are the greatest Moslem power in the world they have failed to induce the Moslem Pathans within their sphere of influence to throw in their lot with the British Empire The position to-day is in fact more difficult than ever Since 1919 there has been a succession of important campaigns against the Frontier tribes in which large forces have been employed, culminating in the extensive operations in Waziristan in the last two years, when between 30,000 and 40,000 troops were in the field The expense has been enormous Nearly half the Indian army is cantoned along the Frontier, not as a protection against Russian or Afghan invasion, but to hold in check three or four hundred thousand fighting men of the border hills, who to all intents and purposes are British subjects The anomaly is obvious It would probably not be far wide of the mark to say that India is spending twelve or fifteen millions a year on what is really border police work, money which should be available for the general purpose of defence The question is the more important now that the reorganization of the army in India has become urgently necessary The Frontier problem has, in fact, become an Imperial problem of the first magnitude

What are the causes of the British failure on the Afghan Frontier? What should be the future policy? The problem would disappear if these warlike hillmen were loyal subjects of the British Crown and ready to fight in its defence Is there any hope of such a metamorphosis? Are the difficulties enhanced or lessened by the experiment in democracy ordained by British statesmen in India and in the Frontier Province itself? These are questions which force themselves on the attention at the present juncture They will be examined in their place in later chapters of this book

Chapter II

FRONTIER TRIBES AND TRIBAL AREAS

THE ethnic pattern in India presents a bewildering variety For thousands of years before the dawn of history a succession of tribal migrations poured through the passes of the North-West Frontier Dravidians, Indo-Aryans, Huns, Scythians This inflow of new human material ceased about the seventh or eighth century A D , except in the Indus valley The Arabs conquered Sindh in the ninth century and partly colonized it , in the tenth century began the series of Moslem invasions from Afghanistan and central Asia, which involved the subjection of almost the whole of India to Moslem rule till the rise of the British power at the end of the eighteenth century The Moslem invaders, Turks, Mongols, Afghans, Mughals, did not, however, expropriate the Hindu population to any great extent , Moslems formed the nucleus of the armies of the new rulers, held the most important civil appointments , military leaders were given great tracts of land as fiefs

In the early years of Moslem rule the Frontier was firmly held , Hindus living in the borderland found it expedient to embrace the religion of their conquerors In the mountainous country bordering on the plains the Moslem invaders did not at first penetrate , there the non-Moslem population was left for

centuries unmolested In the anarchy following the Mongol invasions of the fourteenth century there began a slow infiltration of Afghan tribes from what is now central Afghanistan into the Indus valley and the border hills Most of these Afghan tribes were nomads , they had probably been migrating for centuries to the low country in the winter months, as Afghan tribesmen still do in their thousands to-day When the Delhi government was strong they had to content themselves with the privilege of grazing their flocks and trading , in the anarchy that characterized the close of the fifteenth century they seized the opportunity of ousting the weaker tribes

The movement spread along the present frontier, from Chitral in the north to the Gumal in the south, comprising in its sweep the whole of the tribal hinterland of the North-West Frontier province as well as the plains country between the Indus and the foothills on the west The Indus is now the ethnographical boundary between central Asia and India, separating Afghan from Indian In the north a strong group of allied tribes, the Mohmands and the Yusafzai, appropriated most of the country from Lalpura in Afghanistan to the Indus driving the tribes then in occupation across that river , the Yusafzai and kindred tribes conquered Bajaur, Dir, Swat and Buner and the western slopes of the Black Mountain, driving the Swati tribes across the Indus to the eastern slopes of the ridge Other Indian tribes took refuge in the Indus Kohistan, the great mountain mass on the western Kashmir border Some of the conquered clans became vassals of the invaders, e g the Safis and Kandaharis in Bajaur who adopted

Islam The indigenous inhabitants of Swat and Bajaur were mostly Buddhists, unwarlike and easily overthrown by the highlanders from Afghanistan The Afridis and Orakzais about this time seized Tirah, enslaving or expelling the original Tirahis, some tribes of whom have been identified with the Tajiks of Persia The upper Kurram valley and the Miranzai valley, which forms most of the Kohat district, were annexed by the great Bangash tribe Further south the Khataks found a new home, lower Kurram and the mountain mass between the Gumal and the Tochi valley were seized by the Wazirs and Mahsuds The Bannu oasis and the Tochi valley came ultimately to be occupied by mongrel races, Moslems, and assimilated more or less into Afghan comity and speaking Pushtu, the language of the Afghan Further south the Afghan invaders belonged mostly to the migrant merchant warrior clans of the Powindahs whose descendants, as already observed, moved in great numbers with their families and all their possessions down the Gumal every cold weather to trade in India

These tribal irruptions were not simultaneous and in many cases the process of settlement was spread over long periods, sometimes over a couple of generations Mass movements had slowed down by the time of the Mughal emperor, Baber, in the first quarter of the sixteenth century Intermittently and on a small scale the movement has been carried on almost to the present time The settlement of the Turis in the Kurram is a case in point This tribe of nomads from the Herat direction seized most of upper Kurram under the Sufed Koh from the

Bangash in comparatively recent times. They were not, however, able to oust the Bangash entirely and concluded a convention with them To this day two strong Turi clans are still nomad, living in tents in upper Kurram in the summer and moving down in the winter to warmer regions to graze their flocks and cattle, after sowing their wheat on the higher ground The history of the Turis is an epitome of tribal movements along the North-West Frontier

A brief description of tribal areas and present conditions therein will help to elucidate the Frontier problem Transborder tribal territory is included in political agencies in charge of political officers or agents, in some cases the Deputy Commissioner of the adjacent settled districts, who is generally responsible for district administration, holds charge of the tribes on his borders The map makes clear the distribution between the settled districts and the tribal hinterland. The tribal tracts cover an area of roughly 26,000 square miles, with an estimated population of three and a half millions The area of the settled districts is 13,400 square miles, the population two and a quarter millions

The most northern agency is the Malakand agency, including Dir, Bajaur, Swat and Chitral, in other words the whole of the tribal hinterland north of Peshawar to the Pamirs, between Afghanistan on the west, and Kashmir on the east Chitral lies in the extreme north, a mountainous country separated from Dir by a range over 12,000 feet high Its area is about 4,500 square miles, its population 80,000, living precariously on hill escarpments, extracting a meagre subsistence from their fields extorted with

infinite labour from the hillside These people have no Afghan affinities and speak a language of their own The ruling caste known as Adamzadas show Aryan characteristics. The bulk of the people are known as "Faqir-i-miskin" (indigent poor), a listless unwarlike type A section of them, known as Maulais, stint themselves so as to be able to send a few annas as a yearly offering to his Highness the Aga Khan, their spiritual head The Mihtar of Chitral is the absolute ruler of the country For centuries his predecessors have been at war with their Pathan neighbours or with Kashmir Threatened with absorption by the Afghans the Mihtar in 1876 placed himself under the suzerainty of the Maharaja of that country, with the approval of the British government Later on a British agent was deputed to Chitral, from the Kashmir side In 1895 Umra Khan, a military adventurer who had seized Dir and Bajaur invaded Chitral and besieged the British agent A large British force was sent over the Malakand to effect his release Umra Khan was defeated and fled The Mihtar agreed to accept the joint suzerainty of Britain and Kashmir; a garrison of regular troops was established in his country. In addition the British government maintains an irregular force of 1,000 Chitral scouts, while the Mihtar has a bodyguard of 3,000 men for whom the Government find rifles A subsidy is granted to assist in their upkeep The Mihtar has throughout remained loyal to the British The present Mihtar, who succeeded his father in 1936, is a graduate of the Islamiah college in Peshawar and has received a training in the Indian army He is married to a

sister of the Nawab of Dir. He has the title of his Highness and a salute of guns (eleven) like the ordinary Indian prince

The importance of Chitral from the political point of view lies in the fact that it adjoins the Pamirs, in which Russian influence was established about fifty years ago

The wild independence characteristic of the Pathan in the more isolated border tracts is less marked in the three distinctive regions of the Malakand agency, Dir, Swat and Bajaur The main rivers are the Swat and the Panjkora which, with their affluents, form a series of more or less open valleys in which communications are comparatively easy, land more readily available, and life less hard than, for example, in the barren Mohmand hills or in Tirah In most of this country a kind of feudalism prevails which enables Khans or chiefs to exercise a precarious control over adjacent tribes For example, the Khan of Nawagai who formerly controlled most of Bajaur exercised suzerainty over half a dozen or more minor chiefs who, when he was strong enough to enforce it, performed military service and paid tribute, in their turn levying *ushar* or a tithe of income from their associated tribes The Khans make no attempt at administration , tribal affairs are usually settled by *jirgah* or tribal council

The State or Khanate of Dir has an area of between 4,000 and 5,000 square miles It is inhabited mainly by Yusafzai Pathans, of whom the most important are the Painda Kheyl to which the Nawab himself belongs The Nawab's authority depends to a great extent on the loyalty of this clan , it has in fact

been described as the Achilles heel of his administration In 1895 the then Khan of Dir had been driven from his State by the Umra Khan already referred to He was restored by the British after the relief of Chitral and undertook to keep the road to Chitral open in return for a subsidy A grant of 500 rifles was made to him, and he was given the title of Nawab and accepted British suzerainty

Dir territory extends up the Panjkorah valley, where there are magnificent deodar (cedar) forests These the Nawab exploited through the agency of a Moslem of a well-known religious family, Mian Rahim Shah of Peshawar whose men were able to extract and float down the timber to the Kabul river under the shadow of the Mians sanctity Superstition not infrequently has a commercial value The Mian piled up a large fortune; the Nawab's share was far less but it enabled him to strengthen his position and gave him the resources necessary to enable him to compel the Yusufzai tribes on the right bank of the Swat river to acknowledge his overlordship These territories adjoins Dir on the east In 1915 however the Sandan mullah rallied the tribes against the Nawab with the result that they repudiated his authority The Nawab had a very difficult time during the remainder of the war period in controlling his own mullahs who were all eager for a *jihad* against British He succeeded in keeping his country quiet during the Afghan War of 1919 which was an immense embarrassment to the British authorities Meanwhile the Mian Gul of Swat had allied himself with the right-bank Yusufzais (the right-bank Swatis with the result that

Nawab lost all hope of recovering control in that neighbourhood. The British authorities, however, intervened and ensured the restoration to the Nawab of the Adinzai tract adjacent to the British fort at Chakdarrah under the Malakand, which the Mian had appropriated

Nawab Badshah Khan ruled Dir from 1904 till his death in 1925 His eldest son, Aurangzeb Khan succeeded him As was the case with his father his position has been weakened by family dissensions, a recently concluded alliance with the Khan of Khar in Bajaur, to whom the Nawab is related by marriage, has to some extent neutralized the opposition of his brother His policy of opening up his country by constructing motor roads deserves encouragement from the Indian government, who might consider granting him financial assistance for the purpose Government for a long time have been concerned at the danger of the depletion of the Panjkorah deodar forests and have pressed on the Nawab the desirability of introducing a system of forest conservancy So far he has declined to follow the advice offered and to emphasize their displeasure they have prohibited the floating of Dir timber down the Swat into the Kabul river

The Nawab is not popular He does not trust the older men of his tribe and in his turn fails to inspire confidence He levies revenue but gives little in return, no schools, no hospitals A little more sympathy with his own people would strengthen the foundation of his rule He would then find it less necessary to apply most of his resources to the maintenance of an army His relations with

the Wali of Swat are unfriendly, but it is now understood that the right-bank Swathis are outside the Nawab's sphere of influence and friction is unlikely As suggested in another chapter a strong and capable leader of Dir might be able to absorb Bajaur and build up a small Pathan state or kingdom in subordinate alliance with Britain as has been done by the Wali of Swat Such a development would mean the pacification of a difficult and explosive tract of the borderland

Bajaur lies immediately to the south of Dir, between that country and the Mohmand hills, with Kunar in Afghanistan as its western boundary It is a succession of valleys about 5,000 square miles in area The principal Pathan tribes are the Mamunds, Salarzai and Utman Kheyl For centuries the country has been divided up into small feudal chiefships acknowledging at one time the overlordship of the Khan of Nawagai For the last twenty years that chief has played a minor rôle in Bajaur politics This is mainly due to the fact that the British authorities deprived his predecessor of the title of Nawab and of his subsidy for having allowed his relatives and dependents to join the Mohmands in an attack on the British force at Shabkadr in the Peshawar district in 1915 The stronger tribes have never been completely subdued and have allied themselves from time to time with one Khan or the other as best suited their interests Bajaur is a centre of intrigue and propaganda against all ordered government on both sides of the Durand line, a happy hunting ground of the political mullah British political authorities exercise practically no control, and it is

difficult to counter the activities of these fanatical priests Much of the trouble in Mohmand country is bred in Bajaur, through the implacable hostility of religious leaders such as Badshah Gul, son and successor of the Haji of Turangzai, who commands the allegiance of the Kandaharis and Safis , his outlaw bodyguard increases his prestige His rival, the Faqir of Alingar, a *talib* or disciple of the Sandaqi mullah, has influence with the Utman Kheyl and Mohmands, and has in the last few years repeatedly raised *lashkars* against the British authorities both in Mohmand country and against the protected tribes in the Malakand agency, near the Chakdarrah fort The Red Shirt movement in the Peshawar district has had its reactions among the tribes

In the present alignment of factions in Bajaur the Khan of Khar in alliance with Dir, faces the Khan of Nawagai, who is supported by the Khan of Pashat, Badshah Gul and the upper Mohmands A truce was declared last autumn but it has since been broken The Khan of Khar is not popular with the tribes and is hated by the mullahs With the support of Dir he should be able to hold his own, but it is doubtful whether he has sufficient resources to aspire to the hegemony of Bajaur He hopes for a British alliance and was very disappointed when, three years ago, after driving the Faqir of Alingar and his Utman Kheyl *lashkar* out of the Agra salient (the protected area near Chakdarrah), the British forces did not cross the Panjkorah into Bajaur The obstacle to an alliance is the Khan's unpopularity with the tribes The British could not possibly support a ruler entirely obnoxious to them , to do so would be simply playing

into the hands of the mullahs The first step to the pacification of Bajaur is, as observed elsewhere, the construction of a road from the Peshawar side, from Shabkadr through Mohmand country and Bajaur to link up with the main Malakand–Chitral road

Swat State is a new creation of the past ten or fifteen years, the work of an able religious leader, Mian Gul Shahzada, now known as the Wali of Swat The Swat valley is about 130 miles in length, extending to the great mountain mass of the Indus Kohistan The Pathan tribes have never penetrated the Kohistan, which is occupied by Gujars and other descendants of the tribes driven from Swat and Bajaur by the Yusafzai invasion They have embraced Islam and live under a kind of protectorate of the Swat tribes The population of the Wali's territories including Buner adjacent to the Peshawar border, the tribes of which are under the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, is about a quarter of a million, the area 6,000 or 7,000 square miles The right-bank Swathis (Yusafzais) as already noted were till recently claimed by the Nawab of Dir , they are now included in the confederacy controlled by the Mian Gul

One gets an idea of the topography of Swat from the Malakand ridge or Chakdarrah fort , the river piercing a green ribbon of cultivation as far as the eye can reach, with a background of misty blue mountain ranges The Mian Gul's capital is Saidu, famous for the shrine of his grandfather, the Akhund of Swat, whose prestige still lingers in the family Saidu is connected with the Malakand by a motor road The Mian Gul has built a hospital and school, a guest-house and a residence with up-to-date

amenities such as electric light and modern sanitation He was recognized as the ruler of Swat and Buner by the Indian government in 1926 and was granted a subsidy To prevent constant friction between his rivals in the east and west, Amb and Dir, the Wali was induced to agree to confine his territorial ambitions to the limits then reached In addition he pledged himself to exclude outlaws from his territories This agreement has so far been observed

In the last ten years the Wali has consolidated his position with the help of a strong armed force, and is carrying out a policy of disarmament One important reform may be mentioned For hundreds of years the system of *wesh* has prevailed in the Swat valley, which involves the redistribution every thirty years of lands, houses and villages throughout the countryside in equal shares among all the tribesmen The root idea was to preserve tribal cohesion and prevent individual aggrandizement

The effect on the economic life of the tribe has been disastrous, no one would build a decent house, plant orchards, improve his land or bring new land under cultivation if much expense was involved, knowing as he did that everything must go when the term of the *wesh* ended The Wali has now abolished the system except as regards rice-lands in the river-bed Recently he has built a road connecting the Swat valley through Buner and the Ambeyla pass with Rustam in the Peshawar district This should help to promote trade and friendly intercourse between Swat and the settled districts There can be no doubt that the rise to power of the Wali of Swat is of great importance from the point of view of the pacification

of the border. He was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1930 and was shortly after invested by the Viceroy in his own capital of Saidu.

Adjoining the territory of the Wali of Swat on the east is the country of the Black Mountain tribes. The Black Mountain is so called from the dark forests of fir that cover its slopes. It runs parallel to a long salient thrown up by the Hazara district into the Indus Kohistan on the Kashmir border. Its western boundary is the Indus, its southern a tract of the Hazara district known as feudal Tanawal. The eastern slopes are held by tribes known as Swathis who claim to be Pathans, but are actually descendants of the original Swathis driven from Swat over the Indus by the Yusafzai. They are not Pathans at all. The western side of the Black Mountain ridge is the homeland of another confederacy of Yusafzai tribes akin to their neighbours across the Indus in the Swat valley.

The Black Mountain is really a cul-de-sac and of little importance in frontier administration or from the strategic point of view, though the tribes have on occasion given considerable trouble. They are weak in numbers, less warlike than the Pathan generally, and afraid of their powerful neighbours the Nawab of Amb and the Wali of Swat. So long as these chiefs remain loyal the Black Mountain tribes could not join in a general combination against the Government.

As in Bajaur a characteristic of the political life of the Black Mountain country is the constant struggle of small tribal chiefs for supremacy over the tribes.

The most important of these is the Nawab of Amb, a recognized feudatory of the Indian government, who enjoys the unique distinction of being an independent chief across the Indus, while for the territory he holds in the Hazara district (feudal Tanawal) he is for part of it a British feudatory, for the rest a subject of the King Emperor

The Nawab's territory adjoins Buner, and ten years ago he was heavily involved in a struggle with the Wali of Swat for a share in Buner country At the outset he supported a neighbouring Khan, Abdul Jaffar of Sitana, whom the Swat tribes had chosen as their leader against the Nawab of Dir Ultimately the Amb forces were decisively worsted and as already observed the Wali was by agreement with the Government left in possession of Buner Certain Swat tribes, the Isazai and Madda Kheyl, between the Swat valley and the Indus were specifically excluded from the sphere of influence both of the Nawab of Amb and the Wali of Swat, an arrangement which has apparently led to trouble The Nawab of Amb has an arms factory and manufactures rifled cannon which can throw a solid ball 3,000 yards, a useful weapon for pounding to pieces a tribal fortress

The notoriety of the Black Mountain in frontier history is largely due to the activities of a colony of Moslem refugees from India founded over a century ago in that inaccessible mountain region Its founder was a Moslem of the Wahabi sect, Ahmad Shah of Bareilly He was a Saiyyid claiming descent from the Prophet and by reason of his religious zeal soon attracted disciples His object was to drive the unbelieving Sikhs out of the Panjab, feeling this

was hopeless he moved with his followers into the border hills from which safe retreat he harried the Sikhs in the plains At one time he seized Peshawar with the help of the Yusafzai He was killed by the Sikhs in 1831, but his movement survived and the colony, known as the *Mujahideen* or Hindustani Fanatics, was strengthened by contingents of army deserters after the Mutiny The depredations of the Fanatics in co-operation with Frontier tribesmen led to the Ambeyla campaign in 1863 At that time the colony was situated at Sitana on the left bank of the Indus on the Buner border Sitana was destroyed, whereupon the Fanatics moved to less accessible regions Their anti-British activities have at various times led to unrest among the Black Mountain tribes and were ultimately responsible for the operations of 1890 and 1891 Efforts were made by the British authorities to induce the tribes to expel or accept responsibility for the Fanatics, but without success It appears, however, that the Fanatics realized that if they give further trouble the result might be a tribal combination against them and they accordingly modified their tactics

The leaders of the colony saw in the World War, especially after Turkey became involved, an opportunity of striking a blow for Islam against the unbelievers Many of their supporters in India increased their remittances in money , sent over new recruits In the early years of the War a wild plot known officially as the silk letter conspiracy was hatched by a group of Moslem university students and *maulavis* (Moslem divines) of Deoband, a famous Moslem theological college in the United Provinces

The Fanatics had a hand in the business and it was expected that when the plot had been brought to a head they would be in the vanguard of the Army of God which was to sweep the British from India The idea was that the Sharif of Mecca should be induced to start a movement of the whole Moslem world against Britain, Kabul, Persia, the Indian borderland and the Moslems of India were to provide the Army of God in India The Sharif of Mecca, however, disobligingly joined the Allies and handed over the emissary of Deoband to Britain This meant a re-orientation of the conspiracy

The Turks were only too anxious to create trouble on the Afghan frontier and gave the conspirators every encouragement Throughout the War a group of Moslem university students and other Indian seditionists remained in Kabul trying to work up trouble but without success, owing to the determination of the Amir to keep out of the quarrel The silk letters which gave away the conspiracy were sent from Kabul through a family servant of one of the Moslem students from India They were written on silk handkerchiefs in invisible ink and sewn in the coat of the messenger He went to the home of the student's father, an old and very loyal Indian army officer, who, suspecting mischief, put pressure on the servant till he gave the plot away The letters were addressed to one of the leading *maulavis* of Deoband

Another effort of the *Mujahideen* during the War to promote the cause they had at heart was to murder British officers It is believed that the shooting of two gunner officers through the mess window at night

at Bara Gully in the Murree hills in 1916 was one of their achievements To counter these activities Government agents through the adjacent tribes got into touch with the Amir of the Fanatics and induced him to recall his emissaries He stipulated that he was not to be penalized if any murders were committed before he could get into touch with his agents ! Suspected of treachery by his followers he was shortly afterwards murdered himself

The Fanatics are at present divided into two groups, one of which is located at Chamarkand in Bajaur, the other at Samasta in Madda Kheyl (Yusafzai) country north of Amb on the right bank of the Indus This is one of the tribes excluded from the sphere of influence of Amb or the Wali of Swat in order to remove a bone of contention between the two rulers The result is to make it more difficult to bring pressure to bear on the colony should the necessity arise The Chamarkand community are mostly from Bihar There is in that province a Moslem group of puritanical leanings known as the Ahli-Hadis, whose tenets do not permit them to live in a *Darul harb* or region of war, as India is under a non-Moslem government They are merchants and must make money, and the hide trade in Bihar is lucrative To salve their conscience for disobeying religious injunctions they send regular supplies of money to the *Mujahideen* settlement and at the same time bribe young men to join it The other group is recruited mainly from the Panjab Both gave trouble after the third Afghan War in 1919, the Chamarkand people, in conjunction with the Babra mullah, have been for the last fifteen years actively spreading

communist doctrines among the tribes of Dir, doubtless with the aid of funds from Moscow They actually started national schools in Dir and at one time apparently under Congress auspices disseminated Red Shirt propaganda The colony has at different times sent contingents to the Faqir of Alingar's *lashkars*, in particular they were concerned in an attack on a British picquet during the Faqir's invasion of the Agra salient, and in the fight in which Mr Best, the political agent of Malakand, was killed in 1936 The Samasta community have followed the example of their Chamarkand allies in disseminating communist and anti-British propaganda A newspaper, the *Mujahideen*, is published for the purpose They had a good deal to do with the recent disturbances on the Hazara border in which some of the Black Mountain tribes were involved, though these were if anything more anti-Hindu than anti-British as a result of the Shahid-ganj mosque agitation in Lahore

The strength of the *Mujahideen* is about 1,500 Religious fanaticism is a constant irritant in border politics and the presence and activities of these Moslem zealots in the tribal hinterland help to intensify it Fanatical influences are almost invariably directed against the British government though occasionally they are diverted to the feudal chiefs Ambitious mullahs find the Fanatics useful allies The elimination of *Mujahideen* influence is most desirable in the interests of border pacification, it is not an easy problem The best method would be to stop all support from India, so long as there are Moslems who dream of the restoration of the empire of Islam in India, who loathe the Hindu and

fear his political dominance, this is not likely to be achieved If the British authorities should gain some measure of control in Bajaur, through a strong ruler or otherwise, the Chamarkand colony might be rendered comparatively innocuous, the Samasta colony if brought within the sphere of influence of Amb or Swat would probably move to a more inaccessible region in the Indus Kohistan

As mentioned in an earlier paragraph the great Yusafzai tribe holds most of the Peshawar valley Practically the whole of the eastern portion (the Mardan district) is in their hands The total fighting strength of the tribe is estimated at 170,000 men, about a quarter of whom live in the administered areas The Yusafzai of Mardan enlist readily in the army and irregular Frontier corps and make splendid soldiers Other tribes in the Peshawar valley include Khataks, Mohmands, Daudzai, Utman Kheyl, Muhammandzai, the majority owning kinship with the Yusafzai

The spirit of adventure and enterprise characteristic of the tribe is illustrated by the seizure effected by contingents of Yusafzai of the Rohilkhand, a rich district north of Delhi in the United Provinces, during the anarchy following the decay of the Mughal power in the beginning of the eighteenth century The country was parcelled out among a group of chiefs and their followers They were subjugated by British troops sent by Hastings in 1774 at the request of the Nawab of Oudh One of the chiefs, the Nawab of Rampur, was allowed to retain his fief, the State is still in existence and is one of the most important Moslem States in India

The Mohmands on the British side of the Durand line are under the political control of the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar The total fighting strength of the tribe is about 15,000, including the Afghan Mohmands There are about 4,000 in the Peshawar district, mostly *diwah korah* (of dual domicile) which means that they go to the hills in summer to escape the heat Comparatively few own land; the majority are tenants of the Khans or squirearchy of Peshawar Mohmand country consisting mostly of grim and forbidding hills is about 1,200 square miles in area on the British side of the boundary On the Afghan side the country is less hilly, part of it round Lalpura is in the valley of the Kabul river The splitting up of the jurisdiction over the tribe between the two governments is most unfortunate and militates against the pacification of this part of the border Afghan Mohmands are always spoiling for a fight against the British and on most occasions when the Government has been compelled to send troops into Mohmand country, the Afghan Mohmands and very frequently Afghan irregulars have joined the insurgents There is nothing to deter Mohmands from the other side of the line The British cannot bomb and burn their villages, they are obliged to respect the political boundary They may protest to the Afghan government, the local officials are, however, very unlikely to admit that their tribesmen have transgressed the boundary and they are not called to account Mullahs from the Afghan side like the Babra mullah, and the Chaknaur mullah, are often responsible for stirring up trouble in the British sphere of influence

Afghan interference is a potent factor in the almost permanent state of unrest that distinguishes this part of the border The upper Mohmands are in any case a truculent crowd, inflammable material for the fanatical mullah, perpetually at variance with the lower Mohmands, known as the "assured" clans, because when they came under British influence in 1895 Government guaranteed that they should not lose by being excluded from Afghanistan They receive allowances and are entitled to British protection The policy inspired by the mullahs of the irreconcilable clans both of the upper Mohmands and of Bajaur is to compel the assured clans to renounce all association with the British authorities Attacks on these clans have been frequent in recent years and at times British assistance has been necessary

An irregular wedge of tribal territory juts out from the Tirah massif almost to the Indus, dividing Kohat from Peshawar It is held by the Adam Kheyl Afridis and Jowakkis Political control of the tribes lies between the Deputy Commissioners of Kohat and Peshawar A good road has been constructed through the Kohat Pass and allowances for its protection are paid to the tribes concerned Exposed as they are to sudden attack from British cantonments on either side, the tribes have rarely given trouble

The Afridis of Tirah long held the centre of the stage in the drama of Frontier politics The fact is explained by their possession of the Khyber, the great artery between India, Afghanistan and Central Asia , and by their fighting strength and the inaccessibility of their country Their purdah was not lifted till 1897, since when there has been no British

invasion penetrating into the heart of their country The British first came into contact with the Afridi in 1838, when a British mission under Captain Burnes proceeded to Kabul via the Khyber At that time the Kabul government paid the Afridis allowances for keeping the Pass open as the British do now For part of his journey Burnes had to rely on an Afridi *badragga* or safe-conduct A year or so later, while the main British force was advancing on Kabul via Kandahar an irregular force under British officers, with the permission of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, moved through Peshawar and fought its way through the Khyber against Afridi opposition Later on the Pass was used as one of the main lines of communication between the British army of occupation at Kabul and Delhi Allowances were paid to the Afridis, but even so there was at times a good deal of fighting and there can be little doubt that in those far-off days was bred in the Afridi mind the antipathy they still feel towards the Firingees (Europeans) Their politics at the time consisted in a savage hatred of the Sikhs They had little interest in Kabul, all they wanted was to be left alone to exploit their advantageous position of commanding the principal trade route between India and Central Asia To this day the allowances paid by the British in lieu of the right to levy transit dues are one of the main sources of Afridi revenue.

Tirah, the Afridi homeland, is a huge mountain mass split up by several more or less open valleys with a general direction from west to east Of these the most important are the Bazar, the Bara, the Mastura and the Khanki On the west are the Khurmana

A view of Tirah *Mela Ram*

and the Kirman opening on to the Kurram valley Most of Tirah is snow-bound in winter, which compels the tribesmen to descend in large numbers into the lower valleys and the plains for grazing purposes and to find work Many of the Afridis move down into the Khajuri plain in Peshawar in the cold weather, recently taken over by the Government as giving them an additional hold over the tribes

There are eight principal clans of the Afridis with an estimated fighting strength of 51,000 The country is poor and not self-supporting Military service, once an important source of income, is at present denied to the tribesmen because of their unreliability in the War and afterwards for example the attack on Peshawar in 1930 At one time, what with service in the Khyber Rifles and other irregular corps and in the regular army, there must have been between 3,000 and 4,000 Afridis under the British flag There was probably nearly half that number of pensioners To have lost the confidence of the British military authorities is a heavy blow to the tribesmen, affecting as it does their economic life Leading *maliks* have of late made attempts to reinstate themselves: the mullahs and junior tribesmen have stood in their way The subject will be referred to later

As in Bajaur and Mohmand country the influence of the mullahs is a disturbing element in Afridi politics It is true that the Afridi is hard-headed and possessed of more common sense than the Pathan generally, and less liable to be swayed by religious fanaticism; still much of the trouble between the tribes and Government lies at the door of the fanatical

priest Recent events in Tirah are recorded in a later chapter The Afridis and the Khyber Pass are in charge of the Political Agent of the Khyber.

Southern Tirah is occupied by the Orakzai tribes with a fighting strength estimated at about 30,000 They hold the Khanki, the Khurmana and the Kirman valleys, the Samana ridge and parts of the Kohat district along the foothills The Orakzais on the western or Kurram side are the Alisherzai, Zaimusht, Massuzai and Chamkannis under the Political Agent of the Kurram A section of the tribal community are Shiah Moslems, a fact which renders them obnoxious to the Sunni majority The Shiahs of the Frontier are not numerous, and faced with Sunni hostility are strongly in favour of the British connection. In recent years Sunni-Shiah quarrels in eastern Orakzai country in which the Bar Muhammed Kheyl, the Mani Kheyl and Sturi Kheyl Shiahs were opposed to the Mamuzai and other Sunni clans led to British interference and in the end the territory wrested from the Shiahs (Kalaya and the surrounding country) was restored under a British guarantee

The Orakzais on the Kohat side gave trouble from time to time till the occupation in 1891 of the Samana ridge which, 6,000 feet high, dominates southern Tirah as well as the Miranzai valley of Kohat Despite this improvement in the strategic position from the British point of view the Orakzais threw in their lot with the insurgents in 1897, they attacked the British forts and captured an outpost, but in the end were heavily defeated Since then the Kohat Orakzais have given very little trouble They stood

firm in 1919 during the Afghan War at a time when their adherence to the Afghan cause might have involved disaster to the British Similarly when in 1930 Tirah was seething with unrest as a result of Congress propaganda from India they refused to join the Afridis in their campaign against Government which led to an attack on Peshawar The Alisherzai, the Massuzai and the Chamkannis on the Kurram side were more susceptible to anti-British influences They attacked a British post in Kurram during the Afghan War in 1919, and sent their *jirgahs* to Thal to interview the Afghan general Nadir Khan, who exhorted them to bring their *lashkars*, they were, however, too distrustful of Afghan military capacity to commit themselves until the Afghans had achieved an outstanding success They attacked Kurram again in 1930, but were driven back by the Turis

The Orakzais, especially the big Mamuzai clan, are more enterprising than the Afridis, thousands of them are working in Bombay in the mills, and as lascars in British ships The money they remit to their homes helps to maintain their families in comfort

The Bangash tribe holds a wide stretch of country from the Indus along the Miranzai valley of Kohat up the Kurram valley to the Sufed Koh Its fighting strength is put at 6,000, of these 4,000 are in Kohat, the rest in the Kurram valley All are in the administered area except one large village, Biland Kheyl, just south of Thal in the Kohat district There were at one time several Bangash Khans or Chiefs, but they have now lost their influence Another great tribe of the settled districts is the Khataks The tribe could muster 32,000 able-bodied men of whom

12,000 are in the Peshawar valley; the rest in Kohat, of which they occupy the southern tracts. The leading Khan is the Khan of Teri, who at one time controlled practically the whole of Khatak country At the beginning of the present century he could still produce for viceregal or gubernatorial entertainment a squadron of irregular cavalry in chain armour carrying scimitars and bell-mouthed matchlocks The Congress government at Peshawar, in order to increase their hold over his followers, passed a Bill recently depriving him of grazing dues which have been the appanage of the Khanship for centuries The Bill was, however, disallowed by the Governor of the province The Khataks are one of the best elements in the Indian army Many times in a tight corner they have proved their loyalty to the British flag

Beyond the western border of Kohat from Thal to the Sufed Koh lies the beautiful valley of upper Kurram Compressed between mountain ranges for the first thirty miles it expands into an open plain of about 200 square miles between the river and the great mountain barrier of the Sufed Koh This huge mountain range rises to 16,000 feet above the sea The plain itself is about 5,000 feet Tribal settlements cluster round the glens of the Sufed Koh, where mountain streams emerge into the plain, the water of which is used for irrigation The soil is fertile, apart from the ordinary crops fruit of every kind of excellent quality is grown in abundance—grapes, apples, apricots, peaches, quinces, groves of *chenar* trees of noble dimensions fringe the streams The Kurram valley indeed competes with Kashmir

Scene in the Kurram Valley

Baljee

for natural beauty The people are attractive in many ways The tribe politically dominant is the Turis, who, as already observed, ousted the Bangash from most of the valley They can muster some 6,000 men, one and all ready to fight for the British raj but—not outside the valley They are a well-built, good-looking race, their women with their ivory complexions singularly attractive In fact from time to time Amirs of Kabul have taken ladies from the valley into their harems Shiah by religion, they have had to fight for their existence against their Sunni neighbours

The Afghans conquered the valley in the middle of last century and held it until ejected by the British in 1879 during the Afghan War Afghan rule was singularly oppressive and the Turis welcomed the British with open arms and gave them full support The British General Roberts assured them that the Kurram should flow backwards up the Sufed Koh before the British would abandon the valley It is characteristic of the uncertainty of border politics that a year or two later British forces were withdrawn The British Government, however, announced to the Amir that Kurram would be regarded as a British protectorate Self-government was hopeless among a people so faction ridden as are the Turis Complete anarchy soon followed the departure of the British , its reactions on the Khost border led the Amir to threaten reprisals The only solution of the difficulty was to re-occupy the valley and this was effected in 1892 A strong force of Militia, in which the Turis form the principal element, was raised in 1893 It has throughout been staunch and reliable It fought

with credit in '97, it stood firm in 1919 during the Afghan War when most of the other irregular corps, the Khyber Rifles, and North and South Waziristan Militias, mutinied or deserted So far the Turis do not appear to have been infected with extremist politics from India The tribe as a whole, to which 3,000 303 rifles had been issued, put up a splendid fight in 1930 when the Orakzais invaded the valley as a result of Congress propaganda They had to meet a similar attack from the Khost side

Strategically the valley is of some importance, though it can hardly be considered as one of the main routes to Kabul It would be possible with a comparatively small force in Kurram to hold most of the Khost tribes who are the backbone of Afghan military strength, while it is a distinct military advantage to command the back door into Orakzai Tirah through the Khurmana

In present conditions the comparatively small tract of transborder country extending from the lower Kurram to the Gumal presents the most complicated of all frontier problems to the British administrator Roughly 5,000 square miles in area, Waziristan, except for the Kurram and Tochi valleys, is a tangle of difficult mountains For administrative purposes it is divided into two agencies, North and South Waziristan Two great Wazir tribes, the Mahsuds and the Darwesh Kheyl, share the country between them, the latter having two main divisions, the Ahmadzai and the Utmanzai The fighting strength of the Mahsud is put at 18,000 men, with at least 14,000 effective rifles, the Darwesh Kheyl can muster 27,000, of whom about 15,000 are said to possess

modern rifles Every man is an adept at guerrilla warfare These facts indicate the military difficulty of subjugating this group of tribes It is enhanced by the fact that several sections of the Darwesh Kheyl have settlements in Afghanistan, which makes it possible for the tribes when engaged in hostilities with the home government to draw supplies and reinforcements from the Afghan side of the boundary and if necessary to seek refuge there till the storm has blown over

The anarchy that pervades the social and political life of many parts of the borderland is more intense in Waziristan than elsewhere The Wazirs are more fanatical, less easy to handle, they have been less accessible to British influence Since 1852 the Indian government has been compelled to invade their country on seventeen occasions There have been five expeditions since 1911 The operations of 1919–20 were the most desperate and costly in the history of the Frontier The recent campaign was on a similar scale, though the fighting was less severe

The process of tribal migration described in an earlier part of the chapter had not worked itself out among the Wazirs when the British occupation stabilized existing conditions But for this it is practically certain that the more virile Wazirs would have appropriated most of the Bannu district, ejecting or enslaving the degenerate Bannuchis The mongrel Dawars of the Tochi valley would have met a similar fate at the hands either of the Mahsuds or other Wazirs It is possible that even the Bangash of Kohat would have lost some of their lands to nomad Wazirs who every winter used to graze their flocks

and herds in upper Miranzai Hemmed in on all sides the Mahsuds with their growing numbers are finding it increasingly difficult to live on the material resources available to them.

Before the British took over the Frontier the Wazirs had established themselves strongly on the fringes both of the Bannu and the Dera Ismail Khan districts. Several Utmanzai clans have villages on the Bannu border, the Bhittannis, whose country lies in between Mahsud territory and parts of the Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan districts (collectively known as the Derajat) own a number of villages in both districts In fact the Wazirs occupy a strip of country from the Gumal to the Kohat border, they are the gate-keepers of the Derajat Unfortunately they do not live up to their responsibilities Many of them still go to the high ranges and to Afghanistan in the summer months One means of bringing pressure to bear on the tribe is to deny the district to the nomads in the winter or the hills in the summer Other Wazir clans move from the high ranges to the more or less open country in the Kurram and Tochi valleys in the cold weather months (Spinwam, the Sheratullah plain), which exposes them to reprisals from Government forces, though such action is less easy than it was a generation ago when the Wazirs had few weapons of precision

Amir Abdurrahman and his predecessors claimed suzerainty over Waziristan, but in point of fact they never exercised any control over the Wazir tribes The British border authorities in the early days had to take into their own hands the redress of British subjects for outrage by Waziri clans In the eighties

the Afghan authorities decided to occupy salient points in Waziristan, they were, however, forestalled by the British authorities, who hastily seized Jandola, arranged to take over the Gumal, pushed out an Afghan post from Biland Kheyl. The Amir saw that further attempts would be useless and withdrew his agents from Mahsud country. A strong British garrison was stationed in Jandola in the Tank Zam, one of the most important lines of approach to Mahsud country, the Mahsuds agreed to the occupation of the Gumal in return for an allowance of 50,000 rupees per annum (about £3,500 at the time). Shortly afterwards the Ahmadzai Wazirs, nervous of Mahsud encroachment, offered the British the Wana plain at the head of the Gumal. The invitation was accepted in the hope that a British military outpost in that neighbourhood would give the British authorities some hold over the Mahsuds. A body of troops was sent to occupy Wana in 1895. The camp was rushed at night by a Mahsud *lashkar* which was ultimately beaten off. An invasion of Mahsud country followed. Subsequently events in Waziristan will be discussed in another chapter.

Chapter III

BRITISH BORDER ADMINISTRATION

FOR a brief period before the Sikh confederacy challenged British military power in India the Sikhs had established a precarious hold on the Afghan frontier They made no attempt to administer, revenue was collected by military force, only a few strategical points were garrisoned The savage repression exercised by the Sikhs, mingled with studied insults to Islam, roused a frenzy of religious hate in the Pathan, to this day the Sikh is loathed on the Frontier

The grip of the Sikhs had slackened as a result of the war with the British of 1846 It is true that British officers, acting under the orders of the British Resident at Lahore, had to some extent restored Sikh authority before the Sikh army broke into rebellion in 1849 The withdrawal of the mutinous Sikh soldiery to the Panjab, in order to join with their compatriots in the attack on the British, gave the Afghans an opportunity of recovering their lost province of which they were not slow to avail themselves The fort built by Edwardes at Bannu was occupied by their troops, a large force of irregular Afghan cavalry moved down the Khyber and occupied Peshawar It then went on to the Panjab to support the Sikh armies in the vain hope that a British defeat in the

field might preserve the borderland for Islam The Afghans were driven back ignominiously to their hills after the British victory at Gujarat and no attempt was made to prevent the absorption by the British of the Indus province up to the foothills

The trans-Indus territory, or what is to-day the Frontier province, was now combined with the Panjab and a regular administration introduced similar to that in force in the rest of India This was a cardinal error to which most of the subsequent troubles of the new rulers are due The British failed to realize that the Afghan borderland had no affinities with India proper From every point of view, ethnic, linguistic, geographical, as well as in traditions and history, it differs widely from the Panjab For more than a century, omitting the short interval of Sikh rule, it had formed part of the Afghan kingdom to which it was united by sentiment and loyalty as well as by race Where the national spirit is so strong as with the Pathan the expectation that the British official hierarchy would wean him from his attachment to a ruler who embodied Afghan or Pathan nationalism was based on the flimsiest grounds At the outset, thanks to a group of able and efficient officers, order was soon restored and the system held during the Mutiny, eight years later After the Mutiny the quality of the administration deteriorated. The service was undermanned, officers were too frequently interchanged with the Panjab, they had little time to learn the language and get into touch with the people of the districts and the border tribes. The British judicial system with its tribe of lawyers, mostly Hindu, and the Chief Court at Lahore as its

serious cases, a term of imprisonment being substituted for the death penalty The Regulation was merely intended to supplement the action of the regular courts It has been of the greatest value to the administration The Bar naturally disliked it, since the professional lawyer was excluded from its proceedings It may be noted that the *jirgah* was not bound by the strict rules of evidence imposed on the regular courts, based on British law

For nearly fifty years the British made no attempt at restricting the independence of the tribes in the mountain belt on the border British control ended at the foothills The tribes beyond were no man's children In theory they were under the suzerainty of Kabul but there was no recognition of the authority of the Amir The Afghans held the Khyber but did not keep it open for traffic , they were in occupation of the Kurram valley Border forays were of almost everyday occurrence, leading ultimately to punitive expeditions against the offending tribes There were forty such expeditions between the occupation by the British of the Frontier Province in 1849 and the Aghan War of 1878–80, from the Black Mountain on the Hazara border in the north, to the Mahsuds on the south Mahsud country was twice invaded in force and the principal villages burnt, in 1860 and 1881 In most cases little more was done than to inflict a certain amount of material damage and exact a fine The cutting down of fruit trees was one of the least justifiable penalties Troops were, as a rule, withdrawn promptly the burn and scuttle policy Military action was only taken after the ordinary everyday methods of border control had

been exhausted, e g by the stoppages of tribal allowances, seizure of tribesmen or tribal property (the *barampta*) belonging to the tribe in fault, blockade (*bandish*) Tribal responsibility, then as now, was the keystone of the arch of frontier administration Its outstanding feature is that the tribe as a whole and every member of it is responsible for the misdeeds of any of the tribesmen, which means that an aggrieved party can enforce his remedy against any tribesman on whom he can lay his hands It is their own custom, not a British invention To give an example suppose a gang of Jowakkis from the Kohat Pass raid cattle in the Kohat district, the prompt seizure of half a dozen Jowakkis who might happen to be in the Kohat bazar would in all probability ensure the return of the looted animals What happens in such cases is that the relatives of the men held in custody bring pressure through their *maliks* on the actual offenders until restitution is made Action of the kind often prevents serious trouble The *bandish* is a useful means of exerting pressure on a tribe which seems bent on mischief, when the *barampta* has failed, especially when the economic life of the tribe depends largely on its relations with British territory Many of the tribesmen, for example, bring down their cattle to graze in the settled districts in the winter, many of them work there They soon feel the pinch if excluded from the plains in the cold months Other tribes have land on both sides of the border, the Wazirs, Mohmands and Orakzais, for example Most of the Wazirs, even those living in the Bannu district, are nomads and go up with their families and cattle to the high ranges in the summer

A serious defect in the border system during the period under discussion was the employment of big Khans of the settled districts as middlemen in maintaining official relations with the tribes The result was in many cases a series of intrigues which often led to trouble Much of the money spent on allowances and tribal entertainments remained in the pockets of the middlemen Several families in this way have achieved unmerited opulence On the Kohat border one of the Bangash Khans was deported in 1890 to Lahore as a result of his intrigues which ultimately led to an expedition What was wanted was that British officers should deal directly with the tribes, win their confidence and inspire respect Some achieved this , even so they were not exempt from the possibility of a sudden transfer to a remote part of the Panjab

Even before the Afghan War of 1878 it had become obvious that the policy of the close border had been a hopeless failure The tribes felt that they had no part or lot in the *pax Britannica* of the administered territory, that the British government had no use for them Such political predilections as they had were towards Kabul rather than towards India , to have expected any display of loyalty from them would have been absurd Despite all this, however, the mullahs failed to raise the hillmen *en masse* in support of their nominal sovereign, the Amir, against the British invasion of his territory Had they responded to the call to arms the military position would have been greatly complicated There was sporadic trouble , the Afridis harassed the British lines of communication, as did other tribes on the Kurram side , the

Mahsuds burnt the British town of Tank in 1880 as a demonstration in favour of the Amir Several punitive expeditions followed in 1880 and 1881

The British government missed their opportunity of settling the Frontier problem at the close of the second Afghan War It was originally intended to set up Kandahar as a vassal State under British military protection as an outpost against Russian aggression The Amir was granted a military subsidy in return for which he placed control of his foreign relations in British hands The British occupied the Khyber and assumed control of the Khyber tribes, they improved their strategic position by occupying Quetta, the Kurram valley became a British protectorate, the most important problem of the border, control of the tribal hinterland, was left untouched There could be no hope of pacification until the tribes clearly understood to which government they owed allegiance, to Kabul or to Simla

The policy of excluding Kandahar from the Afghan kingdom would not have solved the question of tribal control It might have improved the military position as against Russia On the other hand it would have lessened the value of Afghanistan as a buffer State between Russia and India To the Amir and his people it would have been as Alsace-Lorraine was to France before the War, a standing grievance against Britain What was far more important was a Frontier that would have made it possible for the British to establish effective control over the tribal groups on their frontier as a preliminary to pacification This would probably have involved taking over part at least of the Kunar valley from

Asmar to Jalalabad and on to the Sufed Koh Such a line would have brought in the Mohmands and have shut off the Afridi tribes of the Khyber and Tirah from Kabul influences and Afghan intrigues The annexation of part of the Jalalabad province would have been welcome at the time to many of the leading Khans who had thrown in their lot with the British invader Further south the British would have claimed Birmal, the summer resort of many of the Wazir tribes, in order to gain control over them and the Mahsuds At this period the armament of the tribes was greatly inferior to that of the British-Indian armies They had nothing better than the flintlock and matchlock jezail to oppose to the Martini and Snider, which hopelessly outranged their weapons The suggested Frontier would have made military encirclement possible, disarmament and pacification would have followed in due course In any case the military occupation of the line would have facilitated the stoppage of the arms traffic of later years which poured weapons of precision into the tribal hinterland The Amir Abdurrahman, when installed by the British on the throne of Kabul in 1880, would not have been in a position to oppose the rectification of the Frontier between his dominions and India He had to accept the exclusion of Kandahar, though this was returned to him by the Liberal government soon after his accession As a bargaining counter Kandahar would have ensured the acceptance by him of a Frontier adequate to British needs He was not in any case in a position to object with the British armies still in Kabul Moreover the Afghan government had never exercised anything beyond a shadowy

suzerainty over Kunar and Birmal and most of Mohmand country; their loss to Afghanistan would at the time have been of little consequence, especially when compared with Kandahar India has paid in millions of money and hundreds of lives for the blunder of 1880, indirectly she owes to it her present difficulties on the Afghan border

After the Afghan War the question of separating the North-West Frontier from the Panjab and placing it under a military governor was considered The scheme was supported by Lord Roberts and by some leading politicians It was, however, shelved

The advocates of a forward policy gradually made headway in the eighties, especially after the clash between the Afghans and Russians at Penjdeh in 1886 The implications of the policy followed by Afghan officials on the British border furnished them with new arguments Once the great Amir Abdurrahman had firmly established his rule in the more settled territory of Afghanistan he began to evince interest in the tribes of the British border and there seemed every reason to suppose that he intended to push his outposts up to the British administrative boundary This would have been highly objectionable, especially on the Peshawar border Posts were actually established in some cases adjacent to British territory The best means of countering the Amir's policy was obviously to advance British military posts into tribal territory There had been after the Afghan War constant trouble with the tribes leading to several expeditions, notably the Samana expedition against the Orakzais in 1890–1 To control the Orakzais the Samana, a high mountain ridge domi-

nating the Miranzai valley of Kohat and overlooking southern Tirah, was occupied by military garrisons This was the first important step in the attempt to secure better control

An essential preliminary to a forward policy was the demarcation of the political boundary between India and Afghanistan The question was most distasteful to the Amir, but he realized that a decision was inevitable and he finally agreed to receive in Kabul a British mission headed by Sir Mortimer Durand to discuss the matter Compared with 1880 he was in a much stronger position and the British plenipotentiary had to be content with a line which had serious defects Of these the most important were the exclusion of the Kunar valley from the British sphere, the division of Mohmand allegiance between the two governments, the denial of a strip of territory from Lalpura to the Sufed Koh which would have made possible the partial military encirclement of Tirah, and the retention by the Afghans of the Waziri province of Birmal The settlement left our tribal areas open to political penetration from Afghanistan , it made control of the storm centre of Bajaur difficult , of the Mohmands still more so , it left the Afridis their bolt-hole into Afghanistan , the whole Frontier was open to the arms traffic

The greater part of the line, which extended from the Pamirs to the Persian border, was demarcated on the spot in the next two or three years The British boundary commission was attacked by the Mahsuds at Wana in 1895, which led to a fresh invasion of Mahsud country (Wana and the Gumal Valley were now occupied by a military force)

Meanwhile as a result of the forward policy in the direction of the Pamirs it had been necessary to send a force over the Malakand through Swat and Dir to Chitral, the Nawab of Dir, who controlled a strong confederacy of tribes, concluded an agreement by which, in return for a subsidy, he pledged himself to guarantee the safety of British communications with Chitral

Bajaur, which lies immediately south of Dir, is the happy hunting ground of fanatical mullahs whose pastime is to preach *jihad* against the infidel government of Britain Trouble has been chronic in that area If the British had held the Kunar valley its pacification would have been a comparatively easy matter

The bisecting of the powerful Mohmand tribe has made any real control of the tribe almost impossible Since 1896 there have been half a dozen major expeditions against the Mohmands due largely to Afghan intrigue and the preaching of religious leaders

In 1895 the Tochi valley was occupied at the request of the local inhabitants (the Dawars) who welcomed British protection against the encroachments of the Mahsuds and Wazirs The position in the Kurram valley was at this time typical of British vacillation on the Frontier The valley was occupied in 1878 as noted in Chapter II, but subsequently evacuated on a change of government at Whitehall in 1880 It was finally taken over again in 1893

The Durand line excluded from Kabul political jurisdiction a quarter of a million Pathans of military age, the best fighting men in Asia The Amir could not reconcile himself to the loss of such powerful

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allies It was his deliberate policy to maintain the closest possible relations with our tribesmen · deputations of *maliks* from the British side of the line were welcomed at Kabul , allowances were regularly paid to leading *maliks* , gifts of rifles and ammunition were frequent About this time he published a book on *jihad* which, whatever the intention of its author, certainly created a bad impression

Transborder territory was now split up into political agencies , starting from the north, the Malakand, the Khyber (established in 1881) , the Kurram valley, North and South Waziristan The tribes adjacent to the district borders were placed in relations with the Deputy Commissioners concerned

The border burst into flame from the Tochi to the Malakand in 1897 The threat to tribal independence implicit in the forward policy was perhaps the principal cause The attitude of the Amir, the fanatical preachings of the mullahs, combined with intrigues from Kabul, provided the direct stimulus which brought the *lashkars* together In the fighting that followed Afghan troops and subjects were frequently to be seen in the enemy's forces With the return of peaceful conditions most of the tribes concerned accepted British political influence as a *fait accompli*

Three years later Lord Curzon adopted the policy advocated after the second Afghan War of constituting the Frontier a separate administration directly under the government of India At the same time regular troops were replaced by Militias recruited largely from local tribesmen in most of the transborder territories, the Khyber, Kurram, Tochi,

Wana The system of administration of the settled districts remained unchanged except that a Judicial Commissioner was substituted for the Panjab Chief Court The Pathan no longer had to go to Lahore for an ultimate decision of his quarrels with his neighbour Nothing further was done to simplify the administration Anything of the kind would have been difficult after more than half a century of an elaborate system of government, nevertheless a bold experiment might very well have succeeded

Violent crime had reached appalling dimensions by the end of the century In the hope of checking it a policy of partial disarmament in the settled districts was attempted, confined to rifles, pistols and daggers A natural consequence was to place the border villages at a disadvantage compared with the tribesmen beyond the border It had very little effect on the volume of crime

A factor of outstanding importance in the frontier situation is the improved armament of the tribes Before the war of '97 many of the tribesmen had acquired breech-loading rifles Gun-runners had started a thriving trade through the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan There was a leakage too from Kabul arsenals Rifle thieves were ever on the prowl round British cantonments in the north and now and again brought off a coup Tribesmen were ready to pay fantastic prices for a British Lee-Metford, £50 was not an uncommon figure, equal to about four years' income of the ordinary tribesman Trade through the Gulf was very active during the first decade of the present century until it was practically stopped by the Royal Navy Gun-running

from Afghanistan has, however, continued throughout and is still prevalent The result has been that to-day there are very few tribesmen who have not a weapon of precision, as a result of the enormous increase in the supply during the War the price of a good rifle has diminished Those unable to buy a rifle of European make can usually afford the inexpensive imitation produced in the Kohat Pass, sold for £10 or less Such weapons have a short life, they are, however, fairly accurate and the Pathan is sparing of ammunition, though 303 cartridges no longer cost 1*s* 6*d* a round as was the case before the War It has always been a mystery to the ordinary observer that an all-powerful government should have allowed the manufacture of arms to go on unchecked in the Kohat Pass when it could so easily have been suppressed The only valid reason is that if prohibited in the Pass the factories would be removed to inaccessible territory in Tirah Possibly, but the work of the factories would be greatly hampered, with a greatly decreased output as a consequence

Pacification to be effective means disarmament As things are to-day, to deprive the tribesmen of their weapons is officially regarded as beyond the sphere of practical politics The cost in lives and money of punitive expeditions has, as a result of the increase in rifles in the hands of the tribesmen, been greatly enhanced The threat to the peace of India from a quarter of a million well-armed fighting men hostile to the régime hardly needs emphasis Loyal to the British government the tribesmen of the hinterland might be of great value to the Imperial government, irreconcilable as they are, they would constitute a

serious danger if Imperial armies were engaged in Afghanistan, if Britain were involved in a world war, a concerted rising on the North-West Frontier, especially if supported by Afghanistan, would threaten the very existence of the British power in India, the more so since it would in all probability be impossible to unite Hindu and Moslem in India against a Moslem enemy

The outlaw problem is another of the hard and stubborn facts of the border Murder, especially the blood-feud murder, is rife, a dozen murders may be committed in a riot about water or in a quarrel between rival factions in a village Rather than face the death penalty or a heavy sentence of imprisonment the offender takes refuge across the border where the arm of the law cannot reach him As a rule he finds himself among friends, often of his own tribe Ordinarily he attaches himself as a *hamsayah* or client to a leading *malik*; often a leading *malik* or religious leader will have a bodyguard of outlaws The outlaw has to work hard, not infrequently he is expected to organize and conduct raids and dacoities in British territory where his local knowledge is of value His friends and kinsmen in British villages frequently conspire with him to despoil their adversaries Much of the border crime can be fairly imputed directly or indirectly to the outlaw At one period a policy of repatriating outlaws by means of conciliation committees was attempted, but the result was simply to encourage outlawry, and of recent years the practice has been to penalize the fugitive from justice to the greatest possible extent His property is confiscated, where possible the tribe harbouring

him is held responsible for his conduct, though it is not always possible to enforce such responsibility, as for example when the outlaw is domiciled in Afghanistan With all this there are to-day over a thousand outlaws across the border, a menace to the peace of the districts, and an intractable element in the criminal administration of the province

The problem of crime is, in fact, a *damnosa hereditas* for the new rulers of the Province under the India Act of 1935 Its volume is appalling There has been a steady increase during the past half-century despite partial disarmament, the separation of the province from the Panjab, and the extensive use of the extra-judicial provisions of the Frontier Crime Regulations For example in 1902 the figures for serious crimes against the person (murder, culpable homicide, grievous hurt, etc) were 709 , in 1929 the figures were 2,045 Murders have reached the appalling figure of 900 in a single year With its population of two and a quarter millions only this tale of crime stamps the Frontier Province as the most lawless country on the face of the earth What is the explanation ? The argument that the trouble is due to Pathan vindictiveness is only of partial validity , it does not explain the growing volume of crime The reactions of transborder unrest are an important factor, more effective perhaps now than in the earlier period , one cannot but feel that the most potent cause is the unsuitability of the Indian police and judicial system to Frontier conditions It will be interesting to see on what lines the new popular government approach the correlated problems of outlawry and crime It is unlikely that it will

attempt radical changes The attitude of the educated classes among the Pathans, especially those holding more advanced political ideas, is in favour of relying on the complex judicial machinery of modern civilized life They regard the use of the Frontier Crime Regulation as a slur on their culture, it has been to all intents and purposes abolished The influence of the Bar, which offers a career to many educated young men in the Province, weighed heavily in securing the adoption of this policy If the new administration is unable to effect an improvement the ministry will have a plausible defence ready to its hand It can appeal to transborder conditions, to its lack of control of policy with regard to the tribes, it might groundlessly or otherwise accuse the political authorities of unwillingness to co-operate in the protection of the border Insinuations might be made against the British personnel which presumably will for many years predominate in the services The position will be extremely complicated unless from the outset there is the closest co-operation and sympathy between all the parties concerned The political career of the party in power does not inspire a great degree of confidence

To revert to events on the Frontier after the separation of the province from the Panjab There were no major expeditions during Lord Curzon's term of office (1899–1905) He took credit to himself for the fact that he had only spent £248,000 on punitive measures on the Frontier during his viceroyalty as against four and a half millions in the five years before his arrival in India Most of the charges incurred by him were on account of the Mahsud

blockade of 1900–1 In actual fact it was not a success and the tribe was not brought to terms until the blockading troops were flung across the border

Soon after Lord Curzon's departure there was trouble involving punitive expeditions with the Zakka Kheyl Afridis of the Khyber and the Mohmands These occurrences illustrate the difficulties arising from the close association of British border tribes with Afghanistan Amir Habibullah, who had succeeded his father Amir Abdurrahman in 1900, like the latter regarded the British tribal hinterland within the Durand line as Afghanistan *irredenta* If the coveted territory was irrecoverable at the moment at least it was essential in the interests of Kabul that the tribal *lashkars* should in a crisis range themselves on the side of the Amir as champion of Islam in central Asia To strengthen relations between the tribes and Afghanistan, deputations were invited to Kabul and given subventions in arms and money Feeling that they had Kabul at their back the most turbulent section of the Afridis, the Zakka Kheyl, with the assistance of a desperate gang of outlaws, living in Hazarnao in Afghan territory a short distance from the Khyber, committed a series of outrages over three years from 1905–8 in Kohat and Peshawar A favourite *modus operandi* was to capture Hindu bankers who were taken to the outlaw colony and held up to ransom, in which when paid the local Afghan governor sometimes shared The Afridis were not as a whole disposed to provoke hostilities, and that tribal responsibility is something more than a fiction, is proved by the efforts made by the various tribal *jirgahs* to coerce the Zakka Kheyl

Local frontier experts advocated the occupation of the Bazar valley in order to close the main inlet from Afridi country into Afghanistan The proposal was unfortunately vetoed from Whitehall by Lord Morley Infinite trouble would have been saved had the advice been followed , it would have made possible a policy of gradually bringing the Afridis under effectual control An expedition was finally approved Fortunately the main body of the Afridi tribes stood aloof, though their neutrality had been severely strained by the immunity given to the Zakka Kheyl The latter were severely handled and sued for peace Their good behaviour was guaranteed by a strong combination of Afridi tribes, the Malikdin, Qambar Kheyl, etc Meanwhile the Mohmands, urged on by Afghan intrigue and fanatical preaching, had collected *lashkars* with the object of assisting the Zakka Kheyl The Mohmand *lashkars* included Mohmands and other Afghan subjects from the Amir's territory The rapid conclusion of the Zakka Kheyl operations, however, prevented any effective intervention on the part of the Mohmand *lashkars*, which thereupon moved down to the Peshawar border where they were engaged and dispersed by the British forces and speedily came to terms

A period of comparative tranquillity followed the disturbances of 1908 Trouble at one time in 1910 threatened in the Kohat Pass The Pass Afridis had been speculating heavily in arms in the Persian Gulf Unfortunately for them a large consignment of rifles which they had purchased was seized by the British navy The Afridis demanded compensation, which was refused Government adopted a firm

attitude The Pass Afridis failed to enlist the support of the Afridi confederacy of Tirah Alone they could not challenge the government of India, there was nothing for them but to accept the inevitable

The Curzon transborder system held during the War At one time there was imminent danger that the association of Turkey with the Central Powers might lead to the proclamation of a *jihad* from one end of the Frontier to the other, but the storm-clouds soon lifted This was largely due to the improvement in the attitude of Kabul Had the Amir preached a holy war against the infidel there can be little doubt that the whole borderland would have answered the call The Amir realized that for his government neutrality was the soundest policy and he refused to be drawn into a collision with the British government despite the intrigues of Turkish and German agents There was a good deal of fanatical preaching by mullahs at various places, and to this the sporadic outbreaks that occurred were largely due A large body of Afghan subjects from Khost in the autumn of 1914 swept into the Tochi, their speedy discomfiture acted as a deterrent to others The Haji of Turangzai, a British subject who had recently fled across the border, succeeded in raising Buner on the north-east border of Peshawar against the British The invading *lashkars*, however, found no support from the people of the district and were soon driven back The Haji then moved into Mohmand territory and succeeded in keeping the Mohmand tribe and Bajaur in a ferment throughout the War period Military operations were involved on several occasions and it was found desirable to put up a barbed wire fence

along the Mohmand border Later on, in 1917 the Mahsuds revolted An arduous campaign had to be undertaken in the heat of the summer, mostly with unseasoned troops The use of the aeroplane for the first time in Waziristan had a demoralizing effect, and helped in the patching up of a not too satisfactory peace

The dreaded *jihad* was at last proclaimed from Kabul in the spring of 1919 The new Amir, Amanullah, anxious to attract popularity and to consolidate his position, led his people in an unprovoked attack on India He had been persuaded that the Panjab was in revolt and that the insurgents would welcome the Afghan invader The tribes of the British hinterland would, he confidently expected, rise as one man against the British and carry the forces of the true believers across the Panjab to the capture of Delhi Fortunately for India this appeal did not excite the enthusiasm expected The Amir was not popular, there were many who suspected him of being concerned in the murder of his father Habibullah, and over and above all this an actual success was denied him His forces were flung back in the Khyber and British troops advanced into Afghan territory and seized Dakka Meanwhile the Khyber Rifles had melted away Despite their defection the Afridis did not rise as a body against the British government, though there were minor outbreaks; they and the Orakzais sat on the fence A vigorous Afghan offensive on either front would have brought them down on the side of the invader Further south the trouble was more serious General Nadir Khan seized Thal and practically immobilized

a British brigade in Thal fort as a result of his superiority in guns If he had taken his courage in both hands and swept down the Miranzai valley to Kohat, leaving a small force to contain the British general, the Orakzais would have risen in a body, so would the Bangash and Khatak tribes of the Kohat district The impetus might have carried Nadir Khan to the Indus With such an inspiration the Afridis would no longer have held aloof, it would have taxed the available military resources of the Indian government to the utmost to make headway against 100,000 tribesmen attacking at half a dozen different points Why did Nadir Khan miss this supreme opportunity? The reason was, as he told a British officer several years later, that his one idea was to avoid bringing his troops into collision with the British-Indian troops as he knew they would be scattered like chaff In fact in a few days he was in ignominious flight before a fresh brigade of troops sent from Peshawar to relieve the brigade beleaguered in Thal fort

Revolt spread like wildfire through Waziristan Whether the trouble there might have been avoided is a moot question There was some misunderstanding between the political and military authorities about the withdrawal of Militia garrisons in the Tochi and South Waziristan An attitude of indecision led to the mutiny of both the North and South Waziristan Militias with a heavy loss of rifles and ammunition The revolt of these irregular corps was followed by a general rising of Wazirs and Mahsuds

The Amir soon realized that he had shot his bolt and in August he sued for peace This the British

were only too anxious to concede There were transport difficulties ; most of the available Indian troops were young and unseasoned , both they and their officers were unaccustomed to hill fighting , British troops generally had, it was thought, no heart for a Frontier campaign

And so another opportunity of settling the border problem was allowed to slip The British were in a strong position. The Afghan government had been guilty of an unprovoked attack on British territory , neither Afghan opinion nor opinion on the border would have been outraged if the British had exacted as a penalty a few strips of the God-granted kingdom for the rectification of the Frontier as a guarantee against future aggression They could have demanded part of the Jalalabad province as far as Lalpura in a southerly direction from that point to the Sufed Koh, a few hundred square miles which would have given them control of the Mohmands and have excluded the Afridis from Afghanistan They might further have claimed at least part of Birmal on the Wazirı border and so put themselves in a position completely to dominate the Wazir and Mahsud tribes To enforce acceptance of such terms they might have had to advance to Kabul , there was nothing to stop them In the circumstances the Afghans doubtless felt they had won the war since the British government got nothing out of it but the renouncing by the Afghan government of the military subsidy of £185,000, whereas the Afghan government were released from their treaty dependence on the British government which up to then had controlled their foreign relations

In Waziristan a firmer attitude was adopted In an arduous campaign in which two divisions were engaged the tribes were heavily punished and with their country occupied in force were compelled to accept terms which were unquestionably the thin edge of the wedge in their independence It was decided to locate a strong brigade on the Razmak plateau, to a great extent dominating Mahsud country and some of the more important Wazir tribes, from a height of 6,000 feet At the same time roads were constructed through Mahsud country, linking up the new cantonment with Bannu through the Tochi and with Dera Ismail Khan through the Shahur *tangi* (gorge) and Jandola The position was further strengthened a few years later by the construction of a direct motor road between Razmak and Wana, Wana being occupied by regular troops There had now been a complete reversal of Lord Curzon's policy, the Khyber had been reoccupied by regular troops, so had the Kurram valley, Tochi and Wana, while in addition a new military cantonment had been added to those existing before the Curzon era The forward policy school had come into their own The Militias in North and South Waziristan were reformed under different appellations, the Tochi Scouts and South Waziristan Scouts Much to the chagrin of the Afridis Government refused to reconstitute the Khyber Rifles, in their place a force of tribal levies known as Khassadars was recruited Similar levies were raised in Waziristan to police the new roads

For many years before the War transborder tribesmen had been enlisted in large numbers in the Indian

The expense has been enormous. The province is not and never has been self-supporting. In 1902-3, the first complete year of its separate existence, the expenditure was 71 lakhs of rupees (half a million sterling) as against a revenue of 36 lakhs (£240,000). The expenditure included charges on both sides of the Frontier. Twenty years later the revenue had gone up to 60 lakhs, while the actual expenditure had

Effect of British Artillery Fire

risen to 200 lakhs (£1,300,000 at 1s 4d to the rupee) representing an increase of 170 per cent Ten years later in 1930–1 the revenues of the settled districts had increased to 78 lakhs (say £575,000 at 1s 6d to the rupee), while the expenditure in those districts had increased to £1,450 000 In the tribal areas the net charges amounted to about £1,350,000, giving a total for the tribal and settled areas of £2,800,000 or an increase of more than five times over the figures for the first year of the province Now if the five districts were attached to the Panjab it is very unlikely that anything more would be spent on the administration than its actual revenues, i e about £575,000 It may be said then that the Frontier costs the general taxpayer in India something like two and a quarter million sterling annually The present policy, so far as it can be described as such, is a policy of peaceful penetration Something like thirty millions has been spent on it since the War This does not include additional military charges, consequent on the location of troops in tribal territory, which must constitute a heavy burden on the military budget, absorbing money which might be spent to greater advantage in strengthening the air force and generally modernizing the defence system of India What is there to show for this enormous expenditure, for the efforts of soldiers and administrators on the Frontier for the last fifteen or twenty years? Pacification has certainly not gone very far, a large section of the Frontier (Waziristan) where the policy had been most developed, was in revolt throughout 1937 and in the present year, unrest has been chronic in Mohmand country in Bajaur, the

Chapter IV

FRONTIER SKETCHES AND EPISODES—LIFE BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE—THE YOUNG PATHAN AND POLITICS

THE Afghan borderland is central Asian, not Indian, in its characteristics No apology is needed for again stressing an outstanding fact, too easily forgotten Had it been recognized by British statesmen and administrators the border to-day might have a different tale to tell The policy of forcing the Pathan tribal system into the administrative mould of British India accounts in great measure for the British failure to assimilate the Pathan into the Indian political system

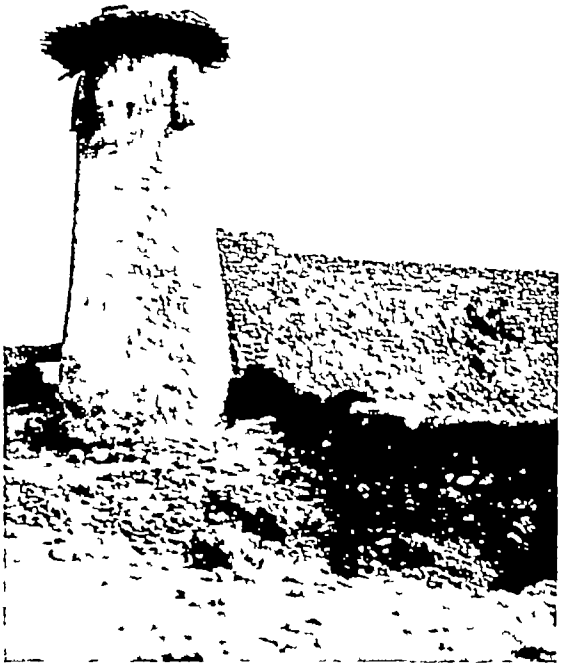
It is true that the Pathan has been caught in the surge of the political agitation that has swept over India, but that has not really changed his attitude towards India and the Hindu

India stops abruptly at the Indus For a thousand years the influence of Brahmanical Hinduism has not been felt beyond that great ethnological and physical boundary Moslems would indeed contend that Hindu influence has largely disappeared from the Panjab itself, especially in the west, where the countryside is peopled by a sturdy peasantry, almost all of them professing the creed of Islam That, however, is a question which does not concern us here. At Attock on the Panjab bank of the river is a great

Mughal fortress built by Akbar in 1581 to dispute the passage of the river with an invader Cross to the opposite side into the Peshawar valley and you will find yourself in a different world The people speak a language of their own utterly unintelligible to an Indian, in dress and appearance they differ from their neighbours across the river, they are distinguished still further from the latter by their customs, their religious fanaticism, their turbulence Almost everywhere the blood feud scars the life of the village.

Another marked characteristic in the Pathan is the absence of any feeling of solidarity with India; he still talks of Hindustan as a foreign country Till the British annexed the Indus valley provinces the Hindu on the Frontier was a client, in the Roman sense, of the village Khan or headman, he was compelled to wear a special head-dress to distinguish him from his Pathan superiors; incidentally his distinctive clothing ensured immunity in the blood feud and other Pathan quarrels He could only ply his trade in the interests of his protectors. Under British law he has achieved equality of status.

Peshawar, the capital city of the Frontier Province, is the principal centre of Pathan life and influence on the border Under the Afghan régime for nearly a hundred years it was second in importance only to Kabul itself Kabul has left an indelible stamp on the life of the great frontier city. The valley of about 3,500 square miles in which it stands is one of the most picturesque and desirable tracts of India. Encircled by hills through which break the Kabul river and its tributaries, the Bara and the Swat,



Baljee

A Frontier Tower *Baljee*

Peshawar The Mall

it is noted for its fertility It is hardly surprising that it is held and owned by one of the strongest races in Asia There are nearly a million Pathans in the Peshawar and Mardan districts which comprise the valley, nearly half of the Pathan population of the administered areas

The Frontier is a land of contrasts, of light and shade, of gaiety and tragedy, of romance and hard reality, the hurried movement of things belonging to the mechanized age is seen, side by side with the customs and practices of the time of Abraham, East and West meet but never really blend Go up the Khyber Pass at ten miles distance from Peshawar Before the foothills are reached already the desert is divided from the sown, emerald-green gives place to drab monotony A mile or two away from the Pass is the Islamiah College, an institution of western culture and science, flinging a challenge to the intellectual darkness that broods over the border hills Jamrud fort at the entrance of the Pass is a huge jumble of towers, bastions and loop-holed walls in sundried brick A Ghilzai caravan from Kabul may be passing, hundreds of camels laden with carpets from Bokhara, Kabul and Herat, dried fruits, melons, lambskins, wool and other stuffs, along with the camel-hair tents and household utensils of the caravan folk The men are splendid specimens of humanity, tall, bearded, with rosy complexions, the women handsome and of equally fine physique In their scheme of life and mental outlook these nomads might almost be said to belong to another millennium How they hate the western car smothering them with dust and forcing them off the road!

And not only does the European motorist impinge on the relics of antiquity on the Khyber road, motor-lorries driven by Afghans ply from Peshawar to Kabul, competing with the caravan They can in a day, if pushed, perform the journey for which the ordinary traveller would take ten or twelve days Not only the lorry now serves the purposes of trade, a British railway runs up the Pass to the Afghan boundary and is available for the carriage of goods The road through the Pass winds through bleak, dreary hills, a waterless, treeless tangle of cliffs and ravines, drought and dreariness incarnate Through this age-old artery linking India with the more vigorous life of the central Asian tableland invading hosts have, through the centuries, swept down to appropriate the riches of India and to dominate her people; wandering tribes seeking a new home have moved through it into the Indus valley and the plains beyond As one goes up the Pass one might in imagination see the nomad Aryans meandering through the hills with their flocks and herds three thousand years or more ago, the march of the mailed hosts of Alexander a thousand years later, and then in another thousand years the myriads of exultant Islam pouring through the gorges to despoil the unbelieving Hindu

The presence of armed levies on peaks overlooking the road is eloquent testimony of the dangers that threaten human life in these dark ravines Half-way up, the Pass widens into stretches of open country, studded with fortified homesteads, each dominated by a pepper-box tower Blood feuds and tribal enmities often lead to the exchange of rifle fire

between rival homesteads and if one is fortunate one might be able to observe a miniature battle in progress, as one drives along, protected by the immutable law that there must be no firing over the road, the British road is sacrosanct One feels that only a great military empire could deny the Pass to invaders, as Britain has done for nearly a hundred years And one might reflect that Britain alone in the last three centuries has sent armies up the Pass to impose her will on the Afghan highlands

Traffic in the Khyber Pass closes at sunset when the picquets are withdrawn, after dusk the authorities no longer guarantee the safety of the traveller Ten miles from the Pass is the great cantonment of Peshawar, outside the walls of the city, in twenty minutes or less after he leaves the Pass the tourist will be caught up in the social life of British military and civil officialdom For seventy years British military stations on the Frontier were unenclosed, military and police sentries and patrols, with a watchman on each bungalow, were considered adequate protection at night Even so burglaries and other forms of crime were not infrequent Fifteen years ago a series of outrages of which British women were the victims led to a change of policy If British women could be kidnapped and held to ransom, or in order to extort concessions from Government, there might be endless complications, apart from the sufferings involved and the loss of prestige It was thought better to secure practical immunity by enclosing border cantonments with barbed-wire fencing, a gloomy commentary on British border administration Nevertheless, despite military patrols the

border thief at night sometimes defies precautions, crosses the barbed wire by means of ladders, waylays and cuts up a patrol and escapes with its rifles

Life behind the barbed wire has many attractions, though the ordinary visitor, unless very young or hedonistically inclined, is apt to find the constant round of gaiety and the heavy official atmosphere tiring Practically everybody is concerned with the business of government or the training of troops Where men forgather at the Mess or Club the talk is of manœuvres, of staff work and other military interests , of possible trouble on the border or criticism of the strategy of a campaign actually in progress, of sport in one form or other, especially polo , there will be pungent comments on border policy if the company is military in its composition The seeker after knowledge would not learn much of Indian life or politics in such an atmosphere , the military mind in India still worships force as the solvent of political troubles in the East, though the attitude is changing and one meets brilliant soldiers who have taken the trouble to get a real grip of the complexities of Indian politics

Peshawar is fortunate in being able to tap the irrigation system which waters the fields of the villager The result is that many of the bungalows have delightfully green lawns, with masses of roses and other English flowers in profusion The climate in the cold weather months is ideal, cool and bracing in the day, cold at night Many Englishwomen find life in Peshawar attractive Golf, tennis, hunting, racing, dances, dinners, theatricals, receptions at Government House, give them a reasonably full programme

Household duties are light A few minutes with the cook ; a distribution of *jharons* (dusters of the country), a word or two with the head butler and the day's work of the mem sahib is over In fact at eleven in the morning you might find the lady of the bungalow with perhaps thirty or forty others of her sex and a sprinkling of men trying to dissipate boredom by drinking cocktails at the Club

Neither wars nor rumours of wars are allowed to disturb the cheerful atmosphere of the Peshawar Club Even when the air is full of grimness, as when Afridis were besieging the cantonment, the sense of humour of the British makes itself felt and the Club had a good laugh over a little incident concerning the ever-present question of precedence A few women had remained behind in Peshawar after the hot weather flight To make sure of their safety they had been collected at the Club and an infantry guard placed over them The billiard-room had been arranged as a dormitory A senior officer attacked the worried secretary "Isn't it a bit thick," he asked, " to jam a colonel's wife among all these other women ? Couldn't you give her the bridge-room to herself ? "

Yet with all the luxuries and opportunities for distraction in a place like Peshawar there is something artificial about it all , one feels one is living in a vacuum, in a little oasis reproducing in some ways an English environment , there is little real contact with the larger life outside the barbed wire What do these Englishwomen in Peshawar know or care about India ? you might ask Many of them after years of residence in the East hardly know the

The ladies' room in the Peshawar Club is certainly not the place to study the real India Conversation would not get far beyond the iniquities of the Indian servant, bazar prices, the latest run with the Peshawar Vale Hunt, dress, scandal, a forecast of betrothals, Government House gossip, perhaps the latest novel An Indian officer or two might be seen at the Club, up to quite recently Indian officers with King's commissions were not allowed to be full members of the Peshawar Club despite admonitions from Simla They were only admitted on sufferance The Commanding Officer of one partially Indianized regiment refused to allow his British officers to join the Club because of the indignity imposed on their Indian confrères Another Commanding Officer of a cavalry

regiment in similar circumstances not only kept his officers away from the Club but refused to lend his horses to Club members In the end the inhibition was removed Unofficial Indians are still not eligible for membership, a curious anomaly when one recalls the fact that the head of the Pathan ministry which now rules the Province lives in cantonments, and has insisted on claiming for himself one of the best Government bungalows He will probably claim others for his colleagues, introducing a new element in the social life at Frontier Headquarters Will one still observe at big official garden parties the involuntary segregation of East and West that has hitherto characterized them? Will promotion and precedence hold their place in the mental horizon of officialdom? The brilliant uniforms of soldier and political will contrast oddly with the garb of the rulers of the province, clad in the homespun prescribed by the Congress dictator

With all this it would be unreasonable to suggest that the Mayfair Spirit completely dominates life in Frontier military stations For one thing there are dangers to be faced there which are not met with in other parts of India The border tribesman has taken to the cult of the bomb, and in your morning ride over the racecourse a bomb may explode under your horse's feet, or under your car on the high road Attempts are sometimes made to poison the water supply Now and again Englishwomen have been held up while motoring It is not surprising that in such conditions Englishwomen are not allowed to ride outside the barbed wire without an escort There are times, not infrequent of late, when the

atmosphere is heavy with forboding, and women fear for their menfolk facing death in a Frontier campaign With so much to distract them Englishwomen have at least some excuse for not looking beyond their narrow social boundaries Yet there are Englishwomen with a broader outlook who do make an effort to get into touch with Indian life, especially in the big towns , many are doing splendid work in the missions and in Indian schools In Peshawar city, for example, you will find Englishwomen in the mission hospital winning the esteem and affection of the people And, too, even the morbid critic cannot but admire the girl who dances till one o'clock in the morning and at seven is mounted and ready for a hard run with the Peshawar Vale Hounds Here is a glimpse of the old reckless spirit which built the Empire and of which one sees too little to-day in India In the big commercial centres down country the position is improving , many leaders of British business would admit that the exclusiveness of their class in the past is largely responsible for the difficulties they have to face now that finance, trade, and commerce are brought within the orbit of the Indian politician A stronger infusion of the new spirit in society behind the barbed wire would help in the solution of Frontier problems

At this point the objection may be raised that the criticism of the Englishwoman's life in India suggests that she should play a rôle impossible of fulfilment Is it fair to expect from her that she should be a political missionary in a strange country where she is unfamiliar with the language and social customs of the people? It would take nearly a lifetime of

study before she could establish any real touch with Indian life And Englishwomen, especially the wives of officers in the British army, are often merely birds of passage

All this is true enough, but it is beyond question that Englishwomen have missed great opportunities in India Most of them are sufficiently educated to take an interest in Indian culture and social and religious customs if not in Indian politics , in efforts directed to this end they might find an escape from the boredom that obsesses a great many of them at different times Many Indian families of the professional and well-to-do classes have received an English education , the society of their women would be worth cultivating, and there is not the least doubt that if this had been done in the past, the British would now have more of the moral support from Indians they need in these days of political turmoil The purdah system is breaking down , Indian women are now taking a prominent part in politics , some are actually ministers in various provincial governments Would it not be worth while for Englishwomen to cultivate the friendship of women of this type? Would it not add to the interest of life? The great political experiment which British statesmen have initiated in India depends for its success on the close co-operation of Indians and Englishmen If it fails the difficulty of keeping India in the Empire will be enhanced On the Frontier, more than in any other part of India, it is essential that political stability should be assured Will English women living in Frontier cantonments think it worth while to make an effort to produce an atmosphere

of good will and friendship between Briton and Pathan ?

The initial responsibility for preparing the way of understanding between the two races undoubtedly lies on the shoulders of the officials, civil, political and military, whose daily work brings them into direct contact with Pathan and Indian Relations between the British civil and political bureaucracy and their Pathan colleagues and the Pathan gentry are usually friendly, British officers would be prepared to cultivate social relations with the new rulers of the province so far as Congress etiquette permits There are soldiers, too, who respect and admire the Pathan for his courage, his spirit of independence, and his military qualities If men such as these as well as political officers were in friendly relations with leading families which send the thousand young Pathans to the Islamiah college by the Khyber Pass, one feels that there would be a healthier political atmosphere on the borderland

The visitor to the Frontier capital should pay a visit to the city and especially to the Gor Khatri, a huge whitewashed building overlooking the packed bazar Here General Avitabile, an Italian in the service of Ranjit Singh, held his court as governor of the borderland for the Sikhs, here he dealt out savage justice to the hated Pathan, sometimes taking a tribute of Pathan heads instead of revenue Looking down on the flat roofs of the many-storied houses and shops one gets some idea of how the city lives, the picturesque crowd in the bazar of the story-tellers where Pathans from every part of the Frontier and Kabul mingle with men from central Asia

confirm the impression that this is not an Indian city.

Here one may note that of late the bazar of the story-tellers has been full of new tales—stories that the British Raj was crumbling, and that a new Congress Raj was taking its place, illustrated with the vivid imagination of the East

A drive through the Kohat Pass to Kohat is an important item in a Frontier tour One gets glimpses of the life of the transborder tribesman as one goes through the Pass villages The country is held by the Adam Kheyl Afridis, who in return for allowances paid by Government are responsible for the safety of the road Khassadars are not so much in evidence as in the Khyber, yet the traveller is rarely molested Tribal responsibility can on occasions be made effective If the visit to the Pass is made under official auspices the visitor would be allowed to inspect one of the Pass arms factories, where small-bore rifles are made for the Frontier market The industry is profitable and helps to relieve the poverty of the tribesmen The methods used in the manufacture are primitive Much of the work is done by hand Rifle barrels are bored out of soft metal and the rifling soon wears out The transborder tribesman is, however, sparing of ammunition and his precious cartridges are only expended in an emergency The workmen employed are generally of the artificer class from the Panjab , they show amazing ingenuity in producing the delicate mechanism of a small-bore rifle Recently an enterprising Afridi headman utilized his employees' skill in a new direction by turning out excellent counterfeit Kabuli or Afghan

rupees, the currency of his Majesty the King of Afghanistan The coins were smuggled across the Frontier into Afghanistan To allow the enterprise to continue unchecked would have been an unfriendly act on the part of the Indian government to its Afghan neighbour A penalty was imposed and security taken against a repetition of the enterprise

The Pass is shut off from the Kohat district by a high range of hills which slopes to a Kotal or saddle about 3,000 feet high where the road crosses it At this point is a strong post of Frontier constabulary Below the Kotal on the side of the Pass is a glen inhabited by the Bosti Kheyl, a clan of the Adam Kheyl As the visitor looks down on the Bosti Kheyl hamlets, if he is personally conducted, his companion will probably recount to him a tragedy for which a group of Bosti Kheyl were responsible a few years ago The incident is typical of border life

On a stormy night in February 1923, a gang of Bosti Kheyl headed by Sultan Mir, Ajab Gul and Gul Akbar, raided the armoury of the police at Kohat and carried off forty-six 303 rifles, a splendid haul worth nearly £2,000 in the Frontier market Now there are few Pathans who will not give away their neighbours for a handful of rupees and the British authorities soon made sure that the rifles were concealed in the fortified hamlet of Ajab Gul, barely five miles from the Kohat cantonment A counter-raid was secretly arranged and carried out successfully early in March by Frontier constabulary supported by regular troops The principal members of the gang were away, resistance was hopeless, the constabulary cleared the village and made a thorough

search of the premises Ultimately thirty-five of the rifles were discovered skilfully concealed in an underground cellar A lot of other stolen property was found at the same time, including the uniform of a British officer, Colonel Foulkes, murdered in his house at Kohat in 1920 Two outlaws were arrested It was unfortunate that the ringleaders were away as otherwise they would have been taken into custody They were naturally infuriated at their discomfiture, their womenfolk had, they thought, been molested and disgraced during the search of their dwellings, they were determined to avenge the imagined insult

The plan of campaign adopted was to kidnap an Englishwoman It was carried out on the 24th April, a few weeks later Ajab and his gang raided the house of a gunner, Major Ellis, in Kohat during his absence His wife and his daughter were seized, Mrs Ellis resisted so strongly that she was murdered, and only the daughter, a girl of about fifteen years of age, was carried off

The political authorities at once took action Pathan officers of the political service were sent across the border in pursuit An intrepid Englishwoman, Mrs Starr, a member of the staff of the Peshawar mission hospital, accompanied the party that moved in from the Kohat side The Pass Afridis have summer settlements in the Tirah massif, and apparently the girl's captors intended to take her there They were, however, held up for a few days in Orakzai country and meanwhile the pursuit parties had succeeded in establishing touch The tribes through whose country the British officials passed were not particularly inclined to be friendly, but it was made

worth their while to give the usual *badragga* or safe-conduct and other material aid. The rescue was ultimately effected through the good offices of an Orakzai mullah, Mahmud Akhundzada

The matter was not allowed to rest there A fine of 50,000 rupees (£3,700) was imposed on the Pass Afridis, who were compelled to ostracize the offenders, known henceforth officially as the Kohat murder gang They fled to their Tirah settlements, but even there they were not beyond the reach of the arm of Government The Khyber Afridis agreed to exclude them from their limits and for the next two or three years they were constantly being pushed from one tribe to another Meanwhile the gang attempted to kidnap the wife of a British officer, Captain Watts, from Parachiner in the Kurram valley, in the struggle both the latter and his wife were murdered Gul Akbar was captured and executed in Kohat two or three years later, the rest of the gang sought refuge in Afghan territory, and on strong representation from the British government were removed from the Durand line to a remote province on the Russian border.

Zar, zan o zamin Money, women and land are the three mainsprings of action on the Frontier One might add an explosive brand of Islam as equally potent The land hunger of the Indian peasant is perhaps still stronger in the Frontier hills where land can be wrung only from the hillside at the expense of infinite labour A Pathan will do almost anything for money, as every intelligence officer knows Half the blood feuds, half the outlawry that

make everyday life something of a gamble for many frontiersmen are due to women Romance still lingers in the Frontier hills despite the stern realities of life The infatuation of a Pathan for a young Hindu girl led indirectly to the war in Waziristan, here a pretty face moved, not a thousand ships like Helen of Troy, but at least two British divisions The Pathan is indeed a great lover, always ready to risk his life for a pair of bright eyes There are opportunities in most villages, the elderly Khan with a long purse not infrequently equips himself with a young and attractive bride, young women in such circumstances often risk mutilation and disfigurement for the embraces of a young lover And sometimes the blood feud outlaw returns to his village and carries off the not unwilling spouse of his rival Not so long ago there was an incident of the kind near Peshawar The authorities, however, received early intimation that an attempt was to be made Troops and guns were rushed out to the village, the raiding gang was located and encircled in a disused mosque outside the village The guns partially demolished the building, the raiders fell to the last man in a desperate bid for liberty As an annoying anti-climax it was discovered that while the fight was going on the girl and her lover had escaped across the border

Responsibility lies heavily on the shoulders of the British Frontier officer, the excitement and distractions of everyday life offer a good deal of compensation Life in the outposts is always full of incident though often very lonely For weeks on end one may see none of one's own race

The young political officer must always be ready to face a crisis For example, a tribal *lashkar* appearing suddenly out of the blue may mop up a strong patrol of down-country troops and carry off most of its rifles , a Frontier town or village may be raided , he may have to measure swords with a cunning mullah bent on exploiting an imaginary grievance into a tribal demonstration in force with a view to enhance his prestige and improve his claim to leadership On occasion the young officer may have an opportunity of leading his levies in a border scrimmage Perhaps the severest test of his diplomatic skill lies in the handling of a tribal *jirgah* summoned to render an account of its misdeeds, especially if, as is often the case, most of the tribe attends and attempts to overawe the unfortunate victims of tribal outrage who expect to be compensated

The political officer needs a well-developed sense of humour if he is successfully to handle the *jirgah* of a tribe with a black record when there is a dominant crowd of junior members determined to obstruct every attempt to settle cases against them, and to stigmatize any evidence brought forward in proof as a wanton impeachment of the moral standard of the tribe.

The Frontier has been a splendid school of soldiering for the British officer for nearly a century The British first fought the Khyber Afridis in 1839 In '42 Kabul was finally evacuated , three or four years later young British officers were sent from Lahore by the British Resident with the Lahore Durbar to pacify the tribes for the Sikh government The association has continued unbroken ever since

A Kurram jirgah

Baljee

Almost every subaltern who goes to India looks forward to a term of service on the Frontier The crack Frontier Force regiments, e g. the Guides, 5th Gurkhas, can have their pick of the army Service in the irregular Frontier corps, such as the Kurram Militia, the Tochi and South Waziristan Scouts is always popular It is well paid and life is full of episode and variety with an added spice of danger. What a thrill one gets from success when one has turned out on a cold stormy night to struggle miles across ravines and hillsides to hold with a dozen men a pass in the hills, in order to intercept a raiding gang on its way back from the hills with a kidnapped Hindu banker or two to be held up to ransom!

The Afghans of the Frontier have waited for over a century and a half for the great leader to weld together once more the empire of the Durani from the Sutlej or at least from the Indus to the Persian border The man and the hour are not yet But should the British Empire collapse as did the empire of the Mughals, then it is certain that the Afghans and Pathans together would make a bid for the empire of the north

But although the whole congeries of Afghan tribes have not since the British took control from the Sikhs produced a really great leader, there have been among them men who have made history on the border. Most prominent of them all is Amir Abdurrahman Khan, who ruled Kabul with an iron hand from 1880 to his death in 1901 Placed on the throne by the British he himself says in his memoirs that at the time of his accession his authority only extended over the country round Kabul Before he died he

had given Afghanistan a unity it had never had before His career has been sketched elsewhere

The most striking military adventurer on the border in recent times was Umra Khan of Jandul, a minor chief in Bajaur, related to the ruling family in Nawagai He had undoubted military capacity With the help of the Mian Gul of Swat he drove out the ruler of Dir and absorbed the whole of Bajaur and the adjacent valley of Kunar This was about 1890 The Amir Abdurrahman, who in those days claimed Bajaur and Swat as part of the heritage of the Duranis, was powerless to intervene by force of arms , all he could do was to send a mullah to work up the tribes against the usurper The Kabul agent succeeded in forming a strong combination but was defeated and had to fly the country Umra Khan was now at the height of his power He was anxious to conclude an alliance with the British government in the hope of being able through them to obtain supplies of arms and ammunition His overtures were, however, discouraged, though he was given a subsidy in 1892 for maintaining a postal service to Chitral, where the British authorities had established an agency from the Kashmir side A little later Umra Khan invaded Chitral and besieged the British garrison This led to the Malakand expedition of 1895 Umra Khan was unable to oppose the British forces and fled to Afghanistan Some Frontier experts at the time thought that British policy with regard to this Pathan leader was open to criticism Had he been encouraged and supported in setting up a strong system of rule in Bajaur, Dir, Swat and Kunar, he might have become a political satellite

of Britain and with British aid have solved tribal problems on the Peshawar border With a strong ruler in Bajaur and Kunar, Mohmand turbulence would have been brought under control

The career of Chikkai of Chinarak as a border chief is typical of frontier life His real name was Muhammed Sarwar , Chikkai is a nickname meaning a pilferer of maize-cobs His tribe was Zaimusht Orakzai, holding the country between Kohat and the Kurram valley Exiled from home in his youth as the result of a blood feud he accredited himself as a vassal or client (*hamsayah*) to a Khan or village chief in the Kurram valley Later on in the 1880's he collected a gang of outlaws and desperadoes round him and in an inaccessible part of the Afghan border he established a murder agency by which he contracted to do to death at a very reasonable fee anyone obnoxious to a client seeking his services In this way he amassed considerable wealth, which enabled him to retain a large body of reliable henchmen known locally as *lagars* Watching his opportunity he seized a fine tract of territory in his tribal homeland and established himself there in the teeth of the opposition of the strongest Zaimusht clan, the Khoidad Kheyl He soon extended his control to the lower Kurram valley With hundreds of murders on his soul he lived a charmed life His fort at Chinarak was an extraordinary labyrinth of corridors leading up to his own private apartment, guarded by a series of retainers of proved loyalty His four Amazon wives, each a crack shot with a rifle or revolver, kept the innermost approaches The story goes that his barber one day was indiscreet enough

to confess that an attempt had been made to bribe him to cut his patron's throat while shaving him. Chikkai listened quietly and when the shave was over handed the unfortunate barber over to his guard, who slit his throat in the Afghan manner When the British occupied the Kurram valley in 1892 he was far-seeing enough to realize that his interests lay in securing British friendship and he promptly evacuated lower Kurram He was at first rebuffed, but despite this he remained neutral during the widespread tribal risings of 1897, it was mainly due to his influence that the Wazirs of the lower Kurram and his own tribe of the Zaimusht kept out of the war If they had joined the insurgents the difficulties of the British commanders would have been greatly enhanced The services rendered by Chikkai in this emergency were recognized by grant of an allowance of £400 a year He was worth five times as much. Soon afterwards his unpopularity with the neighbouring tribes led to tribal demonstrations against him and at one time Chinarak was besieged The constant threat to his safety led him to listen to overtures from the Amir, who was anxious to enlist the services of a tribal leader of Chikkai's standing The idea evidently was to utilize him in bringing some of the Khost tribes under control The British political authorities on their side did not wish to lose his steadying influence over a tract of territory important from the point of view of border communications, but Government was not prepared to give him any moral or material support and in the end he gave up Chinarak and his famous fortress to a friendly clan and withdrew to Khost, where a large tract of tribal

territory was bestowed on him by the authorities He did not, however, find the atmosphere of Khost congenial and soon re Chinarak Shortly afterwards he was ambu killed by his enemies, the Khoidad Kheyl In appearance he was short and stocky, as active as a goat on the hillside, quiet and deferential towards British officers, it was difficult to imagine when meeting him that his name was a household word on the border as the most accomplished professional assassin of the century

Religious fanaticism has been one of the most difficult problems of the Frontier administrator The tribesman is fiercely patriotic, he resents the least restraint on his liberty The cry of religion in danger, however, rouses him, if anything, more quickly than a threat to his independence It is not surprising, therefore, that a display of zeal for Islam has frequently been used by the ambitious as a way of approach to tribal leadership Most border conflicts have been provoked by the mullah or spiritual leader To assume the mantle of the soldier-priest presents no great difficulty There is no professional hierarchy in the Islam of the Afghan borderland Anyone may become a mullah if he can acquire a reputation for sanctity and so attract followers To attain to leadership drive and character must be added to sanctimonious zeal, equipped with these the aspirant to power has only to seize every opportunity of showing hostility to the alien government Under the absolute Amir the mullah as a rule supports the administration; under the law of Islam he can only oppose the Afghan ruler if his actions brand him

as a *Kafir* Time and again Afghan mullahs defied Amir Abdurrahman on this ground, always in vain, the *Kafir* sacrificed the priest Nevertheless the influence of the mullahs played a considerable part in organizing the opposition to the westernizing policy of Amir Amanullah Most mullahs are ignorant, many illiterate The mullah may or may not as *imam* or chaplain lead the prayers and preach in a mosque Most of the prominent mullahs on the Frontier have their mosques with hostels attached in which live an attendant crowd of *talib ilms* or theological students, turbulent fanatical creatures who, along with the mullah's *shaikhs* or pledged disciples, form a kind of standing army which puts the mullah in a position of vantage as compared with the ordinary tribal *malik* or tribal *jirgah* The combination of spiritual and temporal leadership gives the mullah a strong hold over the ignorant tribal mind and explains the facility with which mullahs like the Faqir of Alingar, the Faqir of Ipi, the Haji of Turangzai, Saiyyid Akbar of Tirah, to mention a few of the prominent militant priests of recent years, have raised *lashkars* and demonstrations against British territory

With armed men always at his disposal a prominent mullah will frequently endeavour to enhance his prestige by interfering in tribal politics, for instance he may raise a *lashkar* and burn the homestead of a tribesman guilty of a serious breach of tribal custom, he may levy penalties from *maliks* considered by public opinion to be too pro-British Fortunately jealousy prevents co-operation between mullahs of different parts of the Frontier, otherwise a dangerous situation might easily develop

The determined attack on the Malakand in 1897, when thousands of tribesmen flung themselves recklessly on the British defences, was led by a mullah known as the mad Faqir, a common appellation of a mullah The Mohmand rising that followed almost immediately was instigated by a leading mullah, the Adda mullah living in Afghan territory The most powerful and turbulent of all the mullah fraternity in recent years was the mullah Powindah, who for over a quarter of a century before his death early in 1914 dominated Mahsud politics The mullah was a Shabi Kheyl Mahsud bitterly hostile to the British government, he was largely responsible for the continuous unrest in Waziristan Supported by his *shaikhs* or disciples he could always rely on the turbulent elements both among the Mahsuds and Wazirs, and his influence made almost impossible any attempt at setting up a workable form of tribal government He claimed to speak for the tribe as a whole, but Government would not recognize his right to do so To prove his powers for mischief he compassed the murder of several British officers, including the Political Agent, with the result that 400 Mahsuds were discharged from the South Waziristan Militia, involving a permanent heavy loss to the tribe Further attempts were made at his instigation to murder another Political Agent, the plot materialized shortly after the mullah's death and a very able Frontier political and two British military officers were murdered one evening in April 1914 in Tank The mullah was succeeded by his son, who wields a good deal of influence as the leading Mahsud mullah, but has not attained the political stature of his father

The stormy petrel of the northern section of the Frontier, the Haji of Turangzai (a border village of the Peshawar district) did not come into prominence till the outbreak of the World War His interest in spiritual matters, combined with the fact that he had performed the Mecca pilgrimage, gave him considerable influence in the Peshawar countryside, which he used chiefly to excite disaffection against the British authorities For this reason he had been placed on heavy security for good behaviour This security was for a fixed term and should have been renewed on expiry Unfortunately owing to an oversight in the District Magistrate's office this was not done and the Haji utilized the opportunity to move across the border Government paid dearly for this act of official carelessness In June 1915 the Haji fomented a rising of the Buner tribes on the north-eastern border of Peshawar , a *lashkar* 4,000 strong invaded British territory but was driven back

The Haji then moved to another part of the Peshawar border, just beyond the Mohmand boundary with Bajaur Here he settled in the village of Lakarai, obtaining control of two vassal clans, the Safis and Kandaharis (a fanatical crowd) by promising to protect them against their overlord, the Khan of Khar He was soon joined by a considerable body of Peshawar outlaws His spiritual reputation enabled him to interfere effectively in Mohmand politics and thanks to his intrigues there was an unending series of alarums and excursions during the War, necessitating the dispatch of troops to Shabkadr, at the main approach to Mohmand country The lower Mohmands had no wish to embroil themselves

with Government and were denounced as *Kafirs* or infidels by the fanatical priest For the next few years his efforts were directed at forcing the lower Mohmands to repudiate their agreements with the British authorities In this he has not succeeded Mohmand raiding during the War was checked by the construction of a barbed-wire entanglement along the Mahsud border Since the end of the War there has been constant trouble with the Mohmands owing to the intrigues of the Haji and his son Badshah Gul, culminating in 1935 in an invasion in force of Mohmand territory Fear that if the operation were prolonged the result might be that the British would construct a road through upper Mohmand country to Bajaur and the Chitral–Malakand road which would have turned the Haji's flank and made his position untenable induced him to advise the Mohmands to make peace There has been further trouble since and as remarked in another chapter settled conditions are impossible on this part of the Frontier till the road so obnoxious to the Haji is built He died towards the end of 1937 His son, Badshah Gul, has succeeded him and wields most of his influence

Another contemporary mullah of outstanding influence is mullah Mahmud Akhundzada leader of the Mamuzai tribe of the Orakzais on the Kohat border The Orakzais, and particularly the Mamuzais, have not disturbed the peace to any great extent since 1897 Mullah Mahmud's influence has generally been directed to the avoidance of collisions with the British The fact that a large number of his tribesmen work in Bombay or as lascars on British ships explains his attitude to a large degree

Of late he has been attempting to establish a *sarishta* or unity party among the Orakzais, his real object is to obtain the hegemony of southern Tirah A fanatical Sunni, as are most of the Tirah tribes, he endeavoured a few years ago to seize the country of the Shiah Orakzais (the Bar Muhammed Kheyl, Sturi Kheyl, Mani Kheyl) who have close associations with the Shiah group of the great Bangash tribe of Kohat and the Shiahs of Kurram In the end, as observed elsewhere, the Government interfered and imposed a peace

The chief distinction between Shiah and Sunni Moslem is that Shiahs refuse to acknowledge the immediate successors of the Prophet and claim that the true Khalif was Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law They are not numerous on the Frontier, and although often fanatical they are as a rule pro-British because of their hostility to the Sunnis Frontier Shiahs are distinguished for the reverence they pay to families of Mians or Saiyyids who claim direct descent from the Prophet Thirty or forty years ago the head of one of these families in Kurram, Mian Mir Akbar, was given semi-divine honours He held the keys of heaven, his curse was to be feared more than death, he and his son could do almost what they liked with their followers or property The family leads one of the principal factions in the Kurram valley, known as the Mian Murids, or disciples of the Mian

Religious influence is not always exercised against the so-called infidel government Reference has already been made to the Wali of Swat, a descendant of the Akhund of Swat, a hereditary religious leader

of great renown in the early days of British rule on the Frontier The Wali is the most powerful and influential of all the leaders of the borderland , he has in fact established a dictatorship over the tribes of the Swat valley and Buner

The power for evil of militant Islam has recently had a striking manifestation in the career of the Faqir of Ipi, who in the short period of a couple of years has succeeded in mobilizing nearly half the tribesmen of Waziristan against the Government Another mullah, the Faqir of Alingar, a minor light in the religious firmament, has been responsible for most of the trouble on the Malakand in recent years Saiyyid Akbar of Tirah, the Adda mullah (Mohmand) the Babra mullah all prominent mischief-makers in their day, have been summoned to the Prophet's Paradise New men are intriguing for the influence they once possessed

too does Sir George Roos-Keppel, one of the most brilliant of the men who have served the Empire on the border, another outstanding officer was Sir Stewart Pears, whose much lamented death as the result of an accident deprived the Province of a governor who, gifted with courage, imagination and outstanding ability, might have given a new orientation to Frontier policy In a less prominent sphere Handyside, a police officer, achieved a reputation that has almost passed into legend Absolutely fearless, he was never so happy as when leading village pursuit parties against raiding gangs, in 1919 he held up a Mahsud *lashkar* with a handful of police and villagers in an almost indefensible police station, an exploit which undoubtedly helped to keep a wavering countryside steady in the face of vivid appeals to the fanaticism of the people, it was he who rounded up the Bosti Kheyl villagers and recovered the police rifles stolen from the Kohat Police by Ajab Gul, he had many similar exploits to his credit He threw away his life by exposing himself unnecessarily to the fire of an outlaw who had taken refuge in a villager's cottage A splendid and inspiring career, so long as Britain can send such men to India she need not despair of her Empire

One of the most extraordinary phenomena of late on the Frontier was the reception accorded by Pathans generally, and especially by young educated Pathans, to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Gandhi, the leaders of the Hindu Congress Why did they show such enthusiasm for the little half-naked Hindu Faqir, a Bania by caste, a class for centuries regarded with amused contempt by the proud, self-reliant

Pathan The last thing the youth of Peshawar want is to be ruled by a Hindu cabinet sitting in Delhi whence an Afghan dynasty at one time dominated most of India The attitude is explained to some extent by the feeling that educated Pathans can no longer look to the British for moral and material co-operation in achieving their political ideals One can imagine them arguing in this way "These English have held the Frontier for nearly a century What do they want? Just to keep it strong against an enemy for the sake of their Empire? What have they done for us? Nothing They hoped to destroy our nationality and assimilate us into the wider nationality of their Indian empire They have failed In order to keep the Frontier strong they refused it political self-expression while conferring democratic government on India, until circumstances in India and agitation on the Frontier compelled them to accord to us the privileges they were forced to give to a lesser breed of men To them our political aspirations are a side issue They don't know us, don't talk to us, don't help us in this crisis of our fate as a people Let us then welcome this little Hindu of the shopkeeper class who has humbled the mighty British Empire We can take care of ourselves when we have won our freedom, later we will take care of the Hindu! Then we may realize our dream of a Pathan republic from Persia to the Sutlej"

The Pathan does not comprehend the British faith in the magic of democracy, a faith which inhibited any attempt at Government interference with the complete liberty of the voter He puts down the British attitude to paralysis and for that reason many

of the less balanced Pathans followed the leadership of Abdul Ghaffar, a fanatical agitator whose object was to raise both border and cis-border Pathans against the British and drive them beyond the Indus The Moderates, the landed gentry and landowners of the older school who are really pro-British have not found a leader, at least no one with the dynamic qualities of Abdul Ghaffar

This fanatical opponent of Britain is an interesting study He and his brother Khan Sahib (now premier of the Frontier Province ministry) are sons of a landowner of Muhammedzai, a village on the Peshawar border, well known to the British authorities , he had a title from the British government The brothers were educated at the Church of England mission school in Peshawar, where they came under the influence of a splendid type of Englishman, Dr Wigram Many of the older generation of Pathans came under Dr Wigram's influence in their youth They form the nucleus of the moderate party to-day That party might be in the ascendant if the young student of twenty-five years ago had been able in later life to maintain contact with the best elements of British life on the border

Khan Sahib went later on to Edinburgh University, where he took a medical degree Abdul Ghaffar at one time thought of going into the army but was, if the story is true, deterred from applying for an Indian commission because on the occasion of a visit he paid to a friend serving in a regiment he witnessed rude and arbitrary behaviour on the part of a junior British officer to an Indian officer much older than himself. His sister was married to the

Haji of Turangzai and Abdul Ghaffar doubtless sympathized with that implacable enemy of the British Raj He started widespread agitation against the Rowlatt Act in 1919 The object of the Act was grossly misrepresented No one would, he proclaimed, be allowed to marry without the consent of Government, if more than three persons assembled they were liable to be fired on by the police, and so on There is little doubt that had the Afghan army not been ignominiously thrust back from the Khyber in May 1919, Abdul Ghaffar would have endeavoured to raise the whole of the Peshawar district against the British

The British authorities were compelled to arrest him in 1920 as he was carrying on his political agitation across the border. He was, however, soon set at liberty He joined the Khilafat movement in India and before long plunged again into sedition with the Red Shirt movement He had by this time realized that an alliance with Congress was the best means of defeating the Government. he sought and

freedom of his province within the framework of Indian freedom"—this is how the Pandit described the Pathan recruit of the Congress One wonders There can indeed be little doubt that non-violence does not appeal to the Pathan temperament, and if Pathans subscribe to it, their action is simply because they think it may be useful as a temporary expedient

Whatever the truth may be, Abdul Ghaffar has succeeded in acquiring an outstanding influence throughout the Province, a unique achievement since the beginning of British rule. It is due almost entirely to him that thousands of young Pathans, educated or illiterate, have been drawn into the vortex of the Indian political movement and have enrolled themselves under the Red Shirt banner His success is mainly the outcome of the British policy of *laissez-faire* The historians of the future will probably find it difficult to explain why a strong government allowed this wild fanatic a free hand to destroy the framework of law and order Is it surprising that Pathans, watching the huge concourse of Gandhi-capped Pathans at a party given by the Frontier premier in honour of Gandhi on the beautiful lawns of a great house, where British high officials once entertained the beauty and fashion of Peshawar, could avoid feeling that the British Raj was crumbling? That feeling would be strengthened by the spectacle of hundreds of young Pathan students at the Islamic college reading an address of welcome to the little Hindu Bania, eulogizing him as the greatest of Indian patriots

One of the greatest problems of the Empire at the moment is to win the loyalty and confidence of the

Frontier Can this be done? There is no easy remedy at hand Much will depend on the course of events in India and the policy of transborder administration, and on the success or otherwise of the conservative elements in opposing the Congress extremists There is one course that has not really been tried, to establish friendly social relations between the British and the educated Pathan Real friendship, real sympathy from the British would go a long way in restoring confidence between the two races If that confidence could be established, British and Pathan of the administered districts could work together to win over the transborder Pathan In that way the Frontier problem may ultimately be solved

Chapter V

KABUL AND SIMLA

A CITY that has seen empires and kingdoms rise and wane, witnessed in its three thousand years of life endless tragedies, Kabul is a city of destiny Time and again it has sent forth invading hosts to dispute the prize of empire, the political nerve-centre of the most virile race in Asia, will it once again exert an overpowering influence on the fate of the teeming millions in the plains beyond the Khyber? Will Kabul again be a name of terror to the Panjab and Delhi as it was a century and a half ago? India herself must answer that question

Kabul lies at the point of convergence of great military roads, from Herat and Kandahar on the west, from the Oxus and central Asia across the Hindu Kush, from India via the Khyber on the east Much of its importance is due to its strategical position It stands at an altitude of 6,000 feet, which gives it an equable climate in the summer and a bracing winter Its population is 100,000

The old city of mud houses straggles along bare hills to the south-east below the Bala Hissar To the north-west the new city is spread out over the plain, with wide roads and houses of a European type, built by German, Italian and Russian architects The German colony is the largest European community

French, Italians, Russians and Japanese have their embassies or legations The British embassy stands pre-eminent for its stately appearance, worthy of the great empire it represents

A motley crowd intermingles in the covered bazars of Kabul, Turks, Iranians, Japanese, Turkomans, Pathans from Peshawar, Mongols Women are not much in evidence, they almost invariably wear *burqas*, long tent-like garments with slits for the eyes

Japanese goods are much in evidence, cheap clothes, goloshes, electric torches Fruit shops are piled high with apples, grapes, pears, melons, pomegranates

The antiquity of the city is proved by a reference in the Vedas, the sacred books of the Hindus, produced a thousand years before the Christian era For centuries under Indian influences, it was a Buddhist city included in the dominions of a Brahmin king whose capital was at Attock on the Indus, when in the ninth century it was captured by Arab invaders, who under the influence of Islam in its exuberant youth, seized and held the Afghan highlands until ejected by the Ghaznevide Turks Mahmud, greatest of the new dynasty, built up a mighty empire with its capital at Ghaznee, south of Kabul He struck terrific blows at India early in the eleventh century His successors annexed most of northern India, later invaders from Afghanistan overran the greater part of the peninsula Ghaznee under Mahmud was a centre of Islamic culture rivalling Baghdad and Cordova in splendour Kabul has not yet recaptured the glory of its competitor of nearly a thousand years ago

About the ninth century the Afghans appear for

the first time on the scene, as serving in the invading armies of Mahmud Three centuries later the Afghan tribes after a fierce resistance were pushed into the mountains by Mongol invaders from China, at this time began the tribal migrations into the Indus valley, Swat, Bajaur and the Indian border hills referred to in another chapter The Mongol emperor Tamerlane established his base at Kabul for his invasion of India Early in the sixteenth century the city finally takes its place as one of the famous capitals in history, when the Mughal emperor Baber, a descendant of Tamerlane, made it his headquarters before his advance on Delhi To Baber it was a city of delight, more beloved than his splendid capital in India To lounge in the gardens he planted is still the favourite recreation of the citizens of Kabul in the cool of a summer evening In one of these gardens is the last resting-place of the great emperor It is worth note that his son and successor, Humayun, was driven out of India by an Afghan chief, Sher Shah, a military adventurer like Baber himself, who seized and held the Delhi throne for several years Humayun only recovered it on his death

The Mughals ruled most of Afghanistan for the first hundred years of the empire in India, though for nearly the whole period the Shah of Persia disputed with them the western provinces of Kandahar and Herat Kandahar constantly changed hands between the rivals till Shah Jahan finally lost it in 1653 Half the annual revenue of the empire had been spent in the military operations directed from Delhi for the recovery of the city As mentioned elsewhere the Mughal emperors never succeeded in

subduing the Afghan tribes of the mountain belt now divided by the Durand line between Afghanistan and India Large sums were spent on allowances to the tribes, on very much the same system as the British have adopted The country was generally peaceful and the Kabul government left the tribes alone to manage their own affairs by means of tribal *jirgahs* In Shah Jahan's reign a general Afghan rising very nearly led to the establishment of an Afghan kingdom

Three centuries ago the Afghan Frontier was, it would appear, if anything a heavier strain on Indian finance than is the case to-day. The Mughals evidently felt that strategically they must hold the Afghan highlands as the buttress of India whatever the expense involved

Persian rule was not popular with the Afghans and towards the end of the seventeenth century the Ghilzais and Abdalis who had maintained their independence in the mountainous country between Kabul and Kandahar drove out the Persians and a few years later invaded Persia and captured the Persian emperor at Tehran, a proof of Afghan military capacity under able leadership Afghan rule in Persia was, however, of short duration It was overthrown by the Persian general Nadir Shah who, after absorbing half central Asia, swept on to the conquest of the Mughal empire The flower of his army were Afghans The Mughal armies were shattered at Panipat in 1739 and Delhi sacked After annexing the Panjab, Nadir Shah returned to Kabul He was shortly after murdered, whereupon one of his leading Afghan officers, Ahmed Shah Abdali, founded the kingdom of Kabul after election

by the Afghan chiefs In 1760 he invaded India and in 1761 at Panipat utterly defeated the Maratha (Hindu) confederacy which had taken the weak and incompetent Delhi emperor under its protection The defeat broke the confederacy and at the same time rudely dissipated the dream of its Brahmin leaders of establishing a Hindu empire on the ruins of Moslem sovereignty from the Indus to Cape Comorin In parenthesis one may observe that the vision has been revived after nearly two hundred years, and Brahmin politicians confidently expect in the not very distant future to see the dream empire of the Brahmin oligarchy of the eighteenth century at last take definite shape

It would be going too far to suggest, as a French historian has recently done, that the Afghan victory made British paramountcy possible , there is, however, no doubt that it did facilitate the ultimate success of the invaders from over the sea

Ahmed Shah had intended to found a Durani empire in Delhi , he was frustrated by the Afghan troops who mutinied and insisted on being led back to Kabul Most of the Panjab, Kashmir and Sindh were annexed to the Afghan empire and were administered from Kabul for half a century till the rise of the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh The Afghan menace was a perpetual terror to India during that period , as late as the end of the eighteenth century Zaman Shah, King of Kabul, was threatening an invasion in force of the Delhi province and Oudh The British authorities in Calcutta were seriously alarmed and took steps to strengthen the Oudh frontier in the interests of their tributary the Nawab Wazir

At this point Kabul is brought into the region of international politics Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and his intrigues with Tipu and other Indian potentates suggested designs on India An advance of the French on India must be made through Persia, it seemed essential to the British authorities to obtain the active co-operation of the Persian government against any such attempt on the part of the French An embassy was accordingly despatched to Tehran with the object of securing an alliance with Persia against the French and at the same time of inducing the Persians to attack Herat and Kandahar and so draw off Zaman Shah, the King of Kabul, from the Panjab An attack on Kabul by a rival claimant to the Afghan throne, however, neutralized the Afghan danger and that particular object of the mission was not pressed. (Curiously enough thirty years later the British were concerned to compel the Persians to leave the Afghans alone) The Persian government agreed to prevent the passage of French troops through its territories Six or seven years later, as the result of a conversation between the Emperor Napoleon and the Tsar of Russia, with the object of wresting India from the British, a fresh mission was despatched to Persia and a fresh treaty concluded At that time French officers were training Persian troops The danger was all the greater because the Russians had extended their Asiatic conquests up to the borders of Persia. A treaty of alliance was concluded at Peshawar in 1809 between Shah Shuja, King of Kabul, and the British against France and Russia, by Elphinstone The request of the Afghan King that the British should give him material and

moral support in dealing with his rebellious half-brother was refused Shortly after he was driven from Afghanistan and a few years later he became a British pensioner In the language of the treaty, "the Servant of the Heavenly Throne, had lifted the veil of separation between the two States", "the everlasting friendship" he claimed to have established between them was not destined to endure

In the next twenty years the Durani empire slowly collapsed It had lost Kashmir and the Panjab to the Sikhs, Sindh was semi-independent, Peshawar was in the hands of a Sikh general By 1836 the lengthening shadow of Russian domination had almost reached the Oxus Russian influence was dominant at Tehran, under Russian instigation a Persian army was besieging Herat The Sirdars or feudal lords of Kandahar, disloyal to their suzerain, Dost Muhammed Khan, then ruling at Kabul, were intriguing with the Persian government.

Fifteen hundred miles away to the east in Calcutta, the centre of British power in India, the gathering storm-clouds on the Oxus were watched with deep anxiety, an anxiety that was reflected at Whitehall What did this threat to India portend? If the Tsar should get control of the Afghan highlands could Britain hold India? The Viceroy, Lord Auckland, in a stately progress, was moving through Oudh and the Delhi province to his summer retreat in Simla The great viceregal camp comprised 12,000 people, troops, civil secretariats, servants, camp followers In those days long journeys were performed in palanquins, it was not unusual to travel by this means of transport from Calcutta to Simla, a journey

occupying from two to three months The overland post to England took much the same time. At this period the Sutlej was the British boundary in the north-west, beyond it was the kingdom of the redoubtable Ranjit Singh During his progress up north Lord Auckland had paid a visit to Lahore and established friendly relations with the Maharaja, whose co-operation and moral support in any policy the British might adopt towards Afghanistan was assured In 1837 Captain Burnes was sent on a mission to Kabul with a view to establishing friendly relations with the Amir. The position was difficult Three or four years earlier the British had allowed Shah Shuja, the ex-Amir, who for many years had lived in India as their pensioner, to make an attempt to recover his throne Ranjit Singh in return for offers of territory on the frontier had lent his support, the Amirs of Sindh as feudatories of Kabul, had provided levies Thus aided, Shah Shuja had succeeded in penetrating as far as Kandahar, where he was utterly defeated by Dost Muhammed. Unfortunately for himself the latter had found it necessary to weaken his Peshawar garrison in order to provide troops to meet the attack of his rival This gave Ranjit Singh the desired opportunity, he moved across the Indus and captured Peshawar Dost Muhammed had since made desperate efforts to recover it, but in vain It seemed at Kabul that the loss of the richest Afghan province was largely due to British unfriendliness Nevertheless the Amir received Burnes civilly, but made it quite clear that the price of his friendship was British help in the recovery of Peshawar, an attitude on his part that can

hardly be described as unreasonable If Britain refused, he would seek assistance elsewhere Lord Auckland had too exaggerated an opinion of the military power of the Sikhs to consider such a proposition, though there was a good deal to be said for it even from the Sikh point of view Their military adventure across the Indus was full of dangerous possibilities. They could not hope to hold down the Frontier tribes indefinitely Sikh rule would never be accepted by the Afghan borderland The strain on the resources of the Sikh kingdom would in the long run have threatened the stability of the régime And if the British had by diplomatic pressure secured the return of Peshawar and the Indus valley to Kabul there would have been no Afghan War of 1839 to '41, and the antipathy created in the Afghan mind by the unprovoked attack from India would have been avoided

Meanwhile a Russian mission had arrived in Kabul and had been well received The Persians, assisted by a Russian military mission, were besieging Herat It seemed, so Simla thought, certain that through their Persian intermediaries Russia might acquire a dominating political influence at Kabul The idea of inducing Ranjit Singh to evacuate the Afghan frontier could not be considered the only alternative, if Russian influence was to be counteracted, was to impose on Afghanistan a ruler who would be friendly to the British Shah Shuja, who had again sought British protection after his defeat by Dost Muhammed, was prepared to support Lord Auckland's policy Burnes was recalled Simla decided to place its nominee on the throne of Kabul

Had a Simla psychology already developed a century ago? Was Lord Auckland dominated by an ambitious bureaucracy, military and civil? Was the careerist already a feature in Simla society? There was no press, no telegraph, no public opinion in India, to disturb life in that little oasis of officialdom in the vast mountain ranges of the Himalayas Wherever the responsibility lies Simla bureaucrats were busy in the autumn of 1838 evolving a plan of campaign which required the movement of a large body of troops over a thousand miles of trackless country, much of it desert and mountainous in the later stages Strategically the plan was absurd, the advance to Kabul should at least have been through the Panjab, Peshawar and the Khyber, which would have halved the distance and greatly facilitated supply However Ranjit Singh did not like the idea and it was not pressed Apart from military considerations the situation in Kabul did not justify extreme measures The garrison of Herat, inspired by Pottinger, a young British officer who happened to be travelling in that direction, was defending itself bravely against the Persians who finally raised the siege, there was a clash between Afghan and Persian interests and the idea that Persia might assist the Afghans against the Sikhs was fantastic The Russian emissary had made no real progress at Kabul Dost Muhammed was the only man alive capable of welding the heterogeneous groups of Afghan tribes under their chiefs into a unit of political power strong enough to oppose the Russian advance, yet the British sought to expel him and to put in his place an unpopular ruler, twice

rejected by the Afghan people. Moral and material support from Britain at that time might have given Afghanistan that stability which it is only now building up

Simla a hundred years ago was not the overcrowded workshop of bureaucracy that it is to-day Discovered twenty years earlier by British political officers in charge of the hill Rajas, it had had its first viceregal visitation in 1828 It had not yet become Army Headquarters in India, the Commander-in-Chief was, however, in residence, the Bishop of Calcutta had found that the Simla ridge suited his health in summer Most of the army was on the Sikh frontier and in the north-west provinces, army officers and their wives found Simla a pleasant change from the heat of the plains In 1839 most of the officers of the garrisons of the northern provinces were either fighting the Afghans or on the road to Afghanistan. The Honourable Emily Eden, sister of the Viceroy, notes in her diary that there were "46 ladies and 12 gentlemen" in Simla apart from the viceregal circle, "40 more ladies and 6 gentlemen" were expected up shortly This disproportion of the sexes was creating a dreadful problem for the A D C's, how could they possibly arrange dances? Moreover, most of the ladies refused to go out "while Captain So-and-So was with the Field Force" However the Queen's Birthday Ball, held on the 24th May, was a great success The scene was Annandale, a valley about 1,000 feet below Simla, where tents and a "boarded platform" for dancing had been set up News of the capture of Kandahar had been received shortly

before, "Victoria," "God Save the Queen," and "Candahar" in huge illuminated letters adorned the great fir trees

There we were [writes the Hon Emily], eating salmon from Scotland and sardines from the Mediterranean in the face of those high hills, some of which have remained untrodden since creation, and we one hundred and five Europeans, surrounded by at least three thousand mountaineers, who, wrapped in their hill blankets, look on at what we call our polite amusements

And so life went on in Simla, fêtes champêtres and competitions in archery, picnics, dances, whist, enlivened occasionally by exciting news from the front Meanwhile the army moved on to Kabul and its final doom The brilliant feat of the capture of Ghaznee sent Simla into ecstasies Then came the news of the entry of the Shah into Kabul in August In point of fact it was more like a funeral procession than a triumph, but Simla crowned itself with laurels, Lord Auckland was the hero of the hour Astonishing policy, astonishing success! A month or two later the Viceroy was acclaimed in Calcutta The fugitive Amir, Dost Muhammed, had surrendered to the British Envoy and had been brought to Calcutta as an honoured guest, he was present at the next Birthday Ball in Calcutta and looked on with polite surprise at English women and men dancing together

Clouds were soon to descend darkly on the Simla scene For more than a year British political officers had failed to grasp Afghan psychology, to read the signs of the times They had not insisted on reason-

ably good government To the British Envoy it seemed that British intervention had brought with it an era of profound peace. English ladies exchanged Simla for Kabul, rejoined their husbands with the Kabul Field Force, after a thousand-miles journey in palanquins ; some of the gaiety of Simla was reproduced in Kabul Then the storm broke In a moment of crisis leadership was wanting both in the political and military spheres There was no ground for immediate withdrawal, yet after the murder of the Envoy the military authorities decided to retreat in mid-winter through the snow-bound passes towards the Khyber , practically the whole army was lost. A few months later, amid the gloom of failure, Lord Auckland's successor, Lord Ellenborough, proclaimed from the Secretary's Lodge the altered policy of Government, on the same date, October 1st, as Lord Auckland had issued three years before his manifesto against the government of Kabul

Dost Muhammed was now allowed to return to Afghanistan He had an enthusiastic welcome from the Afghans, and soon consolidated his position, recovering Kandahar, Herat and the northern provinces. The tribes on the Indian frontier he left to their wild independence, inciting them from time to time to disturb the British border, a habit of Kabul that has only recently been abandoned In the second Sikh War of 1849 the Afghans reoccupied Peshawar, but withdrew after the British victories over the Sikhs The question of restoring his lost provinces to the Durani ruler does not appear to have been considered, partly no doubt because they

were regarded as a heritage from the Sikhs, partly for strategic reasons. This deprivation has been a permanent source of weakness to the Afghan kingdom The Durand line excludes over a third of the Afghan people from their national kingdom

Dost Muhammed observed a strict neutrality through the Mutiny of 1857 Had he chosen to declare a *jihad* against the British at that time, they would have been compelled to withdraw beyond the Indus with consequences that might easily have proved disastrous

The British had twice saved Herat, the key to Afghanistan and India, to the advantage of the Kabul government, in 1839 and again in 1856 when the town had been seized by the Persians In the latter case the withdrawal of the Persians was only secured by the invasion of Persian territory by a British force via the Gulf

Amir Dost Muhammed died in 1863 There followed a war of succession which weakened the Kabul government In the end Amir Sher Ali emerged as victor Meanwhile Russia had pushed her conquests almost to the Oxus Simla at this time was reluctant to commit itself Amir Sher Ali was, however, invited to Ambala in March 1869 when a cash subsidy and arms were presented to him A defensive alliance was, however, refused, though the British helped to strengthen the Amir's position by inducing the Tsar to recognize the Oxus as part of the northern boundary of Afghanistan. One may comment here that the Amir's request was not unreasonable · had it been accepted much future trouble would have been avoided. A year or two

later Simla gave a fresh example of indecision. A dispute arose between Afghanistan and Persia over the boundary between the two countries in Seistan By treaty with Britain Persia had pledged herself not to resort to hostilities with Afghanistan except after inviting British arbitration The Persian government now requested the British government to intervene , the request was refused and the Persian government was told to settle the matter itself. Eventually the dispute was composed by a British mission, but the initial refusal created a bad impression in Kabul, enhanced by the fact that in 1873 the British government, against the opinion of the Viceroy, again refused to pledge themselves to protect the Amir against Russian encroachment. The result, as might have been expected, was to drive the Amir to the conclusion that he must make terms with the potential aggressor in the north His hostility to Britain was intensified by the action of the Indian government in concluding a treaty of alliance with the Khan of Kelat, who held a great tract of desert country now known as British Baluchistan, south of Afghanistan, and isolating it from the sea The Khan had originally been a tributary of the Durani empire, and this forward move on the part of the Indian government was naturally resented at Kabul Quetta was occupied a little later and the flank of Afghanistan turned

The Indian government now attempted to force the Amir to declare his hand The result was that he invited a Russian mission to Kabul and refused to receive an envoy from India The second Afghan War followed · The Afghan forces were defeated and the Amir fled The war, which lasted with a

short interval from 1878 to '81, was really a people's war as far as the Afghans were concerned The wild tribes of the border hills fought fiercely for their independence after the Kabul government had collapsed, they were not prepared to throw in their lot with India, to be ruled by a government of infidels Who ruled at Kabul, provided he were an Afghan and able to keep out the foreigner, was immaterial There was very little leadership, the war threw up on the Afghan side no one with any pretensions to military capacity

The first phase was speedily over The new Amir agreed to place his foreign relations in British hands, to cede Kurram, the Khyber, Peshin and Sibi, Kandahar was to be a British fief independent of Kabul, the Afghan government would receive a British Envoy at its capital Kabul was evacuated, Sir Louis Cavagnari was posted there as British Envoy Within two or three months he and his escort were massacred in the course of a popular rising in Kabul

British prestige was soon restored after heavy fighting with masses of fanatical tribesmen It remained to give Afghanistan a new ruler Fortunately for Britain a strong man capable of dealing with Afghan tribesmen appeared on the scene Abdurrahman was son of Dost Muhammed's eldest son, Afzal, by a Bangash lady belonging to a Kurram family, Sher Ali's mother belonged to the Durani house and for that reason Dost Muhammed had bequeathed the throne to her son Abdurrahman, after the defeat of his father by Sher Ali, had fled to Bokhara, where he had lived on a small pension from the

Russian government The collapse of the government at Kabul gave him his opportunity and crossing the Oxus he soon attracted support from the Uzbegs and moved towards Kabul with a *lashkar* gradually increasing in strength He was offered and accepted the responsibility of the Kabul throne, agreeing to a treaty of much the same type as the earlier treaty A little later the new government at Westminster decided to restore Kandahar

Whether the Second Afghan War was really justifiable is an open question Had the British government been prepared to take in 1873 the action it was compelled by force of circumstances to take after the war, that is, to assume by implication responsibility to protect Afghanistan, it would seem that the invasion of Afghanistan would have been unnecessary

The Russian mission did not remain long in Kabul, it had been sent as a counter-move to British action in favour of Turkey in 1877 during the Turco-Russian war, the peace of 1878 took away the motive for further Russian intrigues in Afghanistan

Abdurrahman Khan rivals Dost Muhammed for pride of place as the greatest leader Afghanistan has produced since Ahmad Shah Durani He found Afghanistan a welter of anarchy, when he assumed power the writ of Kabul did not run beyond the capital itself and perhaps in Jalalabad The country was divided between a crowd of turbulent feudal chiefs. He had no control whatever over the Indian borderland, the frontiers of his country were everywhere indefinite, he had to create an army It took him ten or twelve years to consolidate his

position In his own words he broke the power of the feudal chiefs and substituted one community under one law and one rule Unfortunately the peace he brought into the more accessible tracts did not extend to the mountain mass of the Indian borderland To curb the power of the mullahs he took over ecclesiastical endowments and in lieu paid the hierarchy, mullahs, qazis, muftis, imams and muezzins, from the government treasury For the army he introduced a modified form of conscription, on lines which he claimed had received popular support In his autobiography, published about 1900, he asserts that in his vendetta-ridden country he had reduced the tale of murders to five a year If true, what a contrast to the seven or eight hundred a year in the settled districts of the British North-West Frontier Province with about a fifth of the population It is beyond doubt that crime was kept within bounds as a result of ruthless punishments, mutilations, blindings, the death penalty, frequently inflicted in the Amir's presence in open durbar The most ghastly penalty was imprisonment in the *chahi siyah* or Black Well, into which condemned prisoners were flung and left to die among decaying corpses, filth, reptiles, and vermin, food and water being lowered at intervals to prolong the agony of the captives Sir Salter Pyne, manager of the armament factory at Kabul, found life so secure that he used to fling the bag of silver rupees representing his pay, into a corner of his office, to draw from as he required He would not have had many rupees left after the first day if he had adopted a similar practice in Peshawar!

An important service rendered by Britain to the Amir soon after his accession was the settlement of his international boundaries between Russia and Persia

The value of this great ruler to his country lay chiefly in his flair for diplomacy and administrative ability, he was a patriot eager to make his country, the national homeland of the Afghan, powerful and respected

Simla of the 'eighties was the Simla of Kipling, of the *Plain Tales from the Hills*, of Mrs Hauksbee and her kind It was now the seat of the supreme secretariat, both civil and military, the spiritual home of the heaven-born civilian, of the little tin gods who settled the fate of distant provinces, ordered or refused to allow Frontier campaigns, fought out questions of Frontier policy, suffered agonies over the vagaries of the rupee It is hardly surprising that to the toiler in the red-hot plains, striving loyally to carry out the behests of the Olympians, Simla seemed a Capua, and life there a procession of social pageants, banquets, dances, viceregal levies, honours lists, interspersed with scrambles for title and place

Nevertheless Simla was anxious about the Frontier. Raids and kidnappings were annoying enough, especially since the budget would not stand the racket of campaigns against obnoxious tribes What was more important was the question of military strategy, with the ever-present menace of a Russian advance on Kabul With a British army corps on the Oxus or at Kandahar the question of communications would be of the first importance, the perennial hostility of the border tribesmen would almost cer-

tainly blaze forth and if it did not lead to disaster might mean the diversion of large bodies of troops to hold down the tribal *lashkars* The Amir claimed suzerainty over the border tribes, not with the object of controlling them, but of using them as a pawn in the game should a serious controversy arise between Simla and Kabul The danger could only be obviated by the occupation in force of the Frontier salients, the Malakand, Bajaur, the Khyber, the Kurram, Tochi and Gumal valleys, Wana Simla divided itself into two schools of thought ; the forward policy and the policy of keeping within the administrative border, with its corollary, the " burn and scuttle system " of controlling the tribes

The forward policy was anathema to the Amir It was trying enough for the Afghans to have to avert their eyes from their ravished provinces, Sindh, Baluchistan, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Peshawar, the Kurram valley , the Indian government now wished to deprive Kabul of the cream of the fighting strength of the Afghan nation The border tribes were prepared to admit Afghan suzerainty , Kabul was to them the embodiment of Afghan national pride , while not prepared to contribute to the Kabul exchequer they were at all times ready to fight under the Afghan banner against the hated Indian government

The Amir on his side was considering a forward policy , the idea of Kabul seems to have been to anticipate a British occupation of the salients , Kabul officials from Khost pushed out outposts to Biland Kheyl on the Kohat border near Thal in the lower Kurram valley , similar action was taken

in Zhob (Baluchistan) and Wana; Afghan emissaries were intriguing in Mahsud country with a view to occupying Jandola in the Tank Zam on the Dera Ismail Khan border

Simla now prepared a map of the borderland, on which was indicated the course the British authorities thought the international frontier should follow Amir Abdurrahman complained that it left out the whole of Mohmand country and the tribal country of the Wazirs, including Birmal What he felt was, as he says in his autobiography, that Britain could not possibly assimilate into India the two million or so of Pathans or Afghans whom the Indian government proposed to sever from the parent stock Leave them in political association with Kabul and the Amir was convinced that he could in time make them peaceful subjects of the Afghan throne, and friends of Britain "If you cut them off from my dominions they will never be of any use to you or me You can hold them down in peace, but if at any time a foreign enemy appears on the borders of India, these tribes will be your worst enemies" His arguments failed to impress Simla, to help him make up his mind to receive a mission the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, held up at Peshawar a consignment of Hotchkiss guns purchased by the Afghan government As noted in an earlier chapter the Gumal and Jandola had already been occupied by British troops The Amir had to give way, he succeeded, however, in delaying the mission till Lord Roberts had left the country, because, as he said, the British general had fought and killed Afghans; in reality because he did not want a great British general in Kabul who had

made his reputation in Afghanistan, and because he knew that Lord Roberts was largely responsible for the forward policy When the Durand Mission was ultimately received in Kabul, Abdurrahman, as is noted elsewhere, succeeded in obtaining modifications in the line which made military control and absorption of the Mohmands, Afridi and Wazir tribes, almost an impossibility

The Afghan government, at least until recent years, has never given complete recognition to the international boundary The Amir himself, and Afghan officials all along the Frontier, have constantly intrigued with the tribes on the British side of the line *Jirgahs* have been summoned to Kabul, allowances paid to leading *maliks* and mullahs with the object of keeping the tribes to their national allegiance These intrigues have greatly complicated the efforts of British officials to pacify the tribes

Abdurrahman disliked his political subordination to India He keenly desired to be represented at St James and was bitterly disappointed when the visit of his son Nasrullah to London in 1895 failed to achieve this object What he felt was that British political officers misrepresented his actions and policy to Simla, and Simla gave a false impression of the Kabul government to Whitehall He wrote himself to Lord Salisbury when Simla was pressing him to receive Lord Roberts with a strong escort to discuss the boundary question He used to scoff at the Indian political department and the Indian princes oppressed by Residents and political agents at their courts whose interference extended even to demanding information as to what the princes had for breakfast,

Residents were, he would say, the real rulers of the States, the Kabul throne would not submit to such humiliation

In internal administration Abdurrahman adopted the policy of *festina lente* He wanted railways, a port, and foreign loans to exploit what he considered the immense natural resources of his country At the same time he thought nothing of the kind could be done until the Afghan army was strong enough to keep foreign enemies at a distance His external policy was friendship with Britain Britain and Afghanistan were essential to each other Russia would never dare to attack India if Afghanistan were strong and in alliance with Britain He could not understand why the British government paid such scant attention to the Indian frontier, why, for example, they had allowed the Indian government to weaken him by depriving him of so much of his territory, the Kurram valley, Waziristan, Quetta

The great Amir died in 1901, after a reign of twenty years Though a fanatical Moslem there was nevertheless a strong vein of superstition in his make-up For example he gave out that he was crowned by the Prophet in his dreams, he gained his victories by the help of an old flag he had secured from the tomb of a Saint of Herat known as Khwaja Ahrar (leader of the free), he protected himself from injury by wearing an amulet on his arm He employed several professional astrologers as some Hindu princes still do, he asked their advice as to when to start on a journey, for a propitious day for laying the foundation stone of a factory, when to cut his nails or to take a bath His son Nasrullah was kept outside

Kabul for several days on his return from India because the astrologers said that the day of his arrival was not propitious for his entry into the city The Amir gave his whole energy to the task of rebuilding his broken country, achieving a success that made his name famous in India and Central Asia

The deceased monarch had kept his sons in Kabul instead of giving them provinces, with armies to govern them The result was that his eldest son Habibullah succeeded quietly to the throne which he held till his murder in 1919 In his policy both internal and with Britain he followed in his father's footsteps Tribes on the British side of the line were encouraged to maintain relations with Kabul, receiving both allowances and supplies of rifles and ammunition The intrigues of Afghan officials were largely responsible for the border troubles of 1908 The Amir's friendship was of priceless value during the Great War But for his firm handling of the mullahs the border would have been in flames from one end to the other He succeeded in convincing leading people among the Afghans that it would be the height of folly for the Afghans to throw in their lot with Turkey when Britain and Russia were in alliance, and might combine to crush Afghanistan "We will decide whether to fight Britain or not, when you send an army to Kabul," is what he told the Turkish envoys But for his support Britain might have been compelled to divert three or four divisions of British troops from the western front at what might have been a critical period Reactions in India, especially on the Moslems, would have been serious if we had let the borderland go

The son of Amir Habibullah, Amanullah, after his father's murder, let loose the *jihad* or holy war that had so long been in suspense There was, however, no trace of military leadership among the Afghans, and although most of them responded to the call to arms, the result was never in doubt We should have dictated peace in Kabul, but Simla was tired and nerveless and distracted with internal troubles The spirit that had made the empire was lacking And so the opportunity of redrawing the international boundary in a manner that would have made it easier for Britain to get control of the tribes on the British side of the Durand line was allowed to slip

For some time Kabul had been chafing at the limitation of its international status arising from the responsibility for its foreign relations being in British hands In February 1919 Habibullah had written to the Viceroy demanding written recognition at the Peace Conference of the absolute liberty, freedom of action and perpetual independence of Afghanistan, as a reward for its steadfastness during the War, and to help him to vindicate to his people his policy of friendship with Britain He was murdered almost immediately afterwards The British government must inevitably have recognized the independence of Afghanistan sooner or later It was conceded in the following August as one of the terms of the preliminary peace treaty Shortly afterwards an Afghan delegation toured Europe, Persia and Turkey, utilizing the newly won independence by concluding a series of agreements with various foreign States The Soviet government, for example, gave the Afghan government a subsidy of a million gold roubles in

return for which Russian goods were to be imported duty free into Afghanistan, there was to be a Russian legation at Kabul and consulates in most of the Afghan towns The delegation was received by Lord Curzon as foreign secretary in his best viceregal manner, he seems to have forgotten that things had changed since the days when he ruled India A Russian minister arrived in Kabul in July 1921

After many vicissitudes the Amir accepted a definitive treaty in November 1921 Up to that time the border tribes on the British side, especially the mullahs, had kept their eyes on Kabul, waiting for a new signal to unfurl the banner of Islam The promulgation of the treaty strengthened the moderate elements against the mullahs who were mostly on the side of the Afghans, and against the Afghan allowance-holders The mullahs could now no longer rely on the religious sanction of the Amir's approval and co-operation The irreconcilables spared no effort to denounce the treaty, characterizing it as an ephemeral truce that would be dissipated by the first blast of *ghazi* frenzy All this shows how little progress the British have made in turning the gaze of the tribes of the British border towards Delhi instead of towards Kabul

The terms of the treaty provided for the establishment of a British legation at Kabul and for an Afghan legation in London, and an Afghan Consulate-general at Simla and Delhi Britain no longer guarantees the Afghan frontiers To handicap Soviet intrigue in India on the border the British insisted on the exclusion of Russian consulates from Ghazni, Kandahar and Jalalabad There were various con-

cessions to facilitate trade, the Afghans agreed that in the event of occurrences throwing doubt on Afghan friendliness, the Indian government would be at liberty to hold up arms consigned from abroad to the Afghan government This authority was utilized in 1924 as a consequence of a series of outrages by Afghan subjects in British territory involving attacks on British irregular troops and the murder of British officers However, the Amir soon gave proof that these events did not affect the attitude of the Afghan government towards Britain and the embargo was withdrawn

Direct responsibility for the maintenance of friendly relations between Britain and Kabul had shifted from Kabul to London It was, however, inevitable that the influence of the Indian Foreign Office should continue predominant in view of the close relations between Afghanistan and India So far the post of British Envoy at Kabul had been filled by officers of the Indian political department Through India Kabul had its chief contacts with the outside world

The entry of Afghanistan into the comity of nations had led to an influx of foreigners Most of the principal countries had by this time established legations at Kabul; France, Italy, Germany, Japan, for example Afghanistan signed the Kellogg pact, renouncing war as an instrument of policy It joined the League of Nations

The Afghans soon found that the presence of foreigners in their capital involved complications A series of incidents endangered their relations with some of the governments represented in Kabul To take an example, the Afghan criminal code recog-

nizes the law of *qisas* or retaliation, which places in the hands of the injured family the right to inflict death in its own manner on the murderer An Italian found himself in this predicament, on remonstrance from the Italian Legation the Afghan government intervened and executed the suspect itself, an action greatly resented by the Italian government Similar troubles occurred with a German, whereupon the German representative was withdrawn A treaty of friendship was, however, subsequently concluded

The Amanullah régime never commanded popular support In 1924 there was a serious rebellion of the dominant tribe in Khost, the Mangals, this, and the prevalent discontent, were mainly due to attempts to introduce a general system of female education and other reforms, for which public opinion was still unprepared At one time there was danger of a universal upheaval The arrival of two British aeroplanes in Kabul helped to turn the tide

In 1929 King Amanullah visited Europe and was entertained in London by King George What impressed the Afghan ruler more than anything else was the phenomenal success of the Turkish dictator Kemal Ataturk in westernizing the new Turkey, Amanullah decided that he must do the same for his own kingdom On his return he summoned the Great Council of 1,000 delegates and put before it his programme of reform What he had in view was the complete emancipation of women, suppression of the influence of the mullahs, universal education, and a general system of modernization of trade, communications and the army The Council gave the scheme a cold reception, especially as regards

women and the attack on the mullahs However, despite the lack of support from public opinion the Amir insisted on initiating his policy The result was a series of popular uprisings, he was speedily driven from Kabul by a leader of guerrillas, Bacha Saqqao (the son of the water-carrier) who seized the government The breakdown of the administration at Kabul placed foreigners in jeopardy They were extricated by the British Air Force

The orgies of debauchery which characterized the new régime in Kabul soon alienated popular support from the bandit ruler Nadir Khan, uncle of the fugitive Amir, who was living in retirement in France when his nephew was driven from his throne, although in weak health, started at once for India Proceeding to Khost he soon obtained support against the unpopular upstart ruler The offer of British financial support was declined on the ground that its acceptance would weaken his position with Afghan nationalism, his chances of success would be minimized if he came under the suspicion of being a British nominee Tribesmen from the British side of the Durand line, mostly Wazirs and Mahsuds, flocked to his standard in thousands, it was they who bore the brunt of the fighting which carried Nadir Khan to victory and the throne of the Afghans The tribal contingents were rewarded by the loot of Kabul and returned to their hills with a new interest in the national kingdom Kingmaking was a profitable affair

Three years later they showed a fine impartiality by supporting a movement in Khost in favour of Amanullah Large *lashkars* of Wazirs and Mahsuds

civilizing influences at work in the capital and the more accessible regions spreads outwards to the Durand line can Britain hope to turn the intransigence of the tribes in the British tribal hinterland into loyalty to a self-governing India

What a different Kabul from Abdurrahman Khan's day! Kabul with its legations, its foreign residents, its university, its supreme court of justice, its schools of art, agriculture, medicine, science, its well-equipped hospitals, its smart police. The old prejudice against western innovation is disappearing everywhere A telephone network links most of the leading towns to headquarters; 1,000 miles of motor roads have been constructed along the old caravan routes, greatly facilitating the movement of trade, the ever increasing use of the motor-lorry should in time break down the age-old nomadism of the leading tribes, a custom that undoubtedly hinders progress

Peace and tranquillity in Kabul depend first and foremost on the reliability of the armed forces Army reform has occupied a prominent place in the programme of the royal brothers The standing army is well trained and efficient, a military school has been established, mechanized transport introduced, there is an air force manned by Afghans trained in Europe, a number of cadets are being trained in India The strength of the standing army is 70,000 men Apart from this there is a system of compulsory service, and behind the trained reserves are the masses of tribesmen of the border hills who have been armed with modern rifles

Finance is a weak point, although there is no national debt the revenue based largely on taxes

on land is comparatively small It can only expand as the country develops its resources

An attempt has been made to associate the leading people with the government by the establishment of a National Assembly and the grant of Legislative Councils to the provinces

Industry so far is mainly of the cottage type the weaving of silk, carpet-making, the making of felt mats, sheepskin coats (postins), leather In some localities it should be possible to stimulate village industry by providing cheap power by means of hydro-electric installations

The fruit industry is important, and with motor transport available, the Indian market both for dried and fresh fruit should be capable of expansion A National Bank has been established and the currency placed on a sound basis The policy of the Afghan government has been directed of late to the establishment of a State monopoly of the trade in dried fruits and lambskins This raised strong protests from Indian merchants and it is believed that the system has been to some extent modified

Pushtu is now recognized as the official language in lieu of Persian , Pushtu which thirty years ago a Governor of Khost characterized as " the dialect of dogs ! " It is a language capable of development , Khushal the Khatak, best known of Afghan poets, proved its capacity two centuries ago Every Frontier officer has felt the poetry of the moving cadences of the great Pathan love-song, the Zakhmi Dil

The Afghan Legation in London has already established itself in the social life of the capital Social intercourse between Briton and Afghan in

London should help to smooth diplomatic difficulties Mention may be made of the recent visit to London of Sirdar Muhammad Hashim Khan, Prime Minister of Afghanistan, during which he was the guest of the King The object of the visit was said to be to establish close economic relations with Britain and to sound the British government on the question of a port

On a broad survey of British relations with Kabul over nearly a century and a half, it must be admitted that British diplomacy has not been at its best in dealing with the Afghan problem Except at the outset, when the Durani empire was still a menace to northern India, a strong military government in Kabul as a buffer between her and the Russian aggression was best suited to the interests of India Yet we were never prepared to incur any great risks to secure this objective We refused help to Shah Shuja in 1809 when a military alliance, not worth the paper it was written on, was concluded , a quarter of a century later we might have had a real alliance with Dost Muhammed, if we had been prepared to help him recover Peshawar He would probably never have lost it if, as was undoubtedly our duty, we had restrained the refugee Amir, Shah Shuja from attacking Afghanistan The country might have escaped dismemberment , we should not have attracted the implacable hatred of the Afghan nationalism , Afghanistan might have been a strong national State with the seaboard of what is now British Baluchistan as part of her territory, seaports and a flourishing trade Vulnerable in the Indus valley and on her coasts it would have been to her

interests to keep on good terms with Britain There would have been no Frontier problem on the north-west, no question of assimilating an intractable minority into the Indian political structure A strong government at Kabul holding the Indus valley to the sea would have known how to deal with the border tribes

Forty years later we might have achieved by diplomacy what we failed to achieve by war, a friendly Afghanistan It took Abdurrahman Khan nearly twenty years from 1881 to rebuild the kingdom we had shattered, the fresh legacy of hate left by the war is only now being slowly eradicated

The forward policy was in the existing conditions inevitable No empire with any title to the name could have endured the constant outrage and insult to which its subjects in the plains were exposed The punitive expedition was no remedy, a measure of control was the only possible expedient In settling the Durand line the mistake was made of not going far enough The alternative of allowing the Amir to administer to the foothills, assisting him with arms and money would have been too dangerous, the temptation for the Amir and his people to recover Peshawar should an opportunity have occurred, would have been almost irresistible

And Simla? Has the great city of 70,000 people clinging precariously and unhygienically to the Himalayan ridges been infused with a new life as has Kabul? Times have changed The spirit of adventure that inspired the forward school of the 'eighties has faded out The bureaucracy for a long time has played for safety, it is no libel on a great

service to say that under the blighting influence of Indian politics it has lost its grip The services have always known the careerist seeking place and preferment in the Olympian heights, in an atmosphere steeped in politics men of the type in high positions have perhaps been inclined at times to give undue weight to political considerations Afghan policy is now settled in Whitehall, it is to Simla, however, that Whitehall must look for advice in matters affecting Kabul Some students of Afghan politics are inclined to the opinion that Simla of late years has not thought big enough in questions of border policy One may instance the attack of nerves which Simla endured in 1917 after an initial reverse in the Mahsud campaign, the authorities were inclined to make peace at almost any price, finally they adopted the opinion of the men on the spot Again in 1919 Simla was mainly responsible for the decision to let the Afghans down lightly instead of dictating peace in Kabul on terms which might have made the pacification of the border an easier matter The prestige this would have carried with it would have been of immense value Political considerations undoubtedly led the Simla authorities to allow a free hand to Abdul Ghaffar, the Red Shirt leader, a policy which all but set the whole border in a blaze It cannot be claimed that any real effort has been made to bring about a permanent solution of the Frontier problem What was the cause of the blight that settled on the policy of peaceful penetration which seemed at one time to promise some hope of success? The best answer to the question would be to saunter down the Mall at Simla in August,

and to watch the motley crowd of politicians, mostly clad in the party homespun, proceeding to the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly Listen to the debates, to the fierce invective directed at the Government benches, to the impeachment of Frontier policy as another base move of British imperialism to justify its retention of British troops in India, to the denunciation of British military methods as infinitely worse than anything that can be laid to the charge of Franco or the Japanese , listen to diatribes against defence policy for an hour or so and you will realize why the great bureaucracy, once so powerful, so sure of itself, no longer feels itself able, as in the 'eighties, confidently to press forward a strong policy of pacification on the Frontier

Will Whitehall supply the stimulus required ? Kabul moves from strength to strength , the busy hive of officialdom in Simla no longer holds India in the hollow of its hand

Chapter VI

THE FRONTIER AND INDIAN POLITICS

FOR a quarter of a century after the Mutiny in 1857 India lay quiescent under British rule The country wanted peace and firm government The educated classes were few in number , the Bar, government service, and commerce absorbed most of them Political agitation started in a mild form with the institution of the Indian Congress in the 'eighties , it has throughout been almost entirely Hindu. The Frontier was not and never has been really interested in Hindu politics , political consciousness had not yet taken a definite trend So far as it existed it was concerned with upholding Pathan customs and traditions, the protection of Islam and the maintenance of the kingdom of Afghanistan Beyond the immediate horizon the eyes of the Faithful turned towards Rūm, to the Sultan of Turkey who, as Khalif or viceregent of Allah, was the embodiment of the glory and might of the religion of the Prophet Turkish victories over the infidel Greeks in the later 'nineties were gloated over in every village club (*hujrah*) and mosque on the border , Turkish defeats at the hands of Italy raised the temperature of dislike towards alien rule Hindu agitation over the partition of Bengal in 1905 did not concern the Pathan , the subsequent denial to him of the Morley-Minto

reforms of 1909 was no grievance Political agitators till recent years were discouraged in the Frontier Province, they were usually turned back at the Indus

There has always been a core of fanaticism in Moslem India, typified by Moslems who, breathing hatred against Briton and Hindu alike, dream of the rebirth of the empire of Islam The feeling was kept alive by secret societies such as the *Khuddami Qaaba* or servants of the Holy of Holies of Mecca, the Deoband school of *maulavis* (Moslem divines), the more intransigent joined the colony of Hindustani fanatics or *mujahideen* on the Black Mountain There were danger signals when Turkey joined the Central Powers against Britain, and subversive agitation was only avoided by prompt action in India This, and intensified vigilance on the Frontier during the War, kept the province on an even keel till the conclusion of hostilities The *Khuddami Qaaba* might find a few secret adherents among the rich Moslem trading classes in Peshawar and other towns, a young Khan back from Oxford, disappointed at finding that English society in Peshawar was not interested in him, might talk sedition among his friends, such things left scarcely a ripple on life within the border Beyond it Turkish and German agents in the later phases of the War sought to create trouble among the tribes on both sides of the Durand line, the Persian military cordon put an end to their activities

The War, as it did elsewhere, left an aftermath of trouble on the Frontier Till then the most discordant element in border politics had been the undying hostility of the mullah hierarchy British Frontier

administrators had now to face a new subversive movement, almost as potent and insidious—virulent political agitation from India aimed at destroying British rule With the introduction of a system of partial self-government in India soon after the War the attitude of the British authorities to seditious movements in India generally had undergone a change, there was to be no interference with the political agitator except in the last extremity Agitation over the Rowlatt Act led to insurrection in the Panjab, the Frontier was within an ace of following its example, there was in fact a seditious outbreak in Peshawar city It was the practice of the Afghan government to station at Peshawar a semi-diplomatic trade agent known in British official circles as the Afghan postmaster His office and entourage had long been a centre of fanatical intrigue, he utilized the agitation over the Rowlatt Act to raise the city against the Government almost at the moment that his sovereign, the Amir, was launching his attack on the Khyber defences The trouble was, however, nipped in the bud before it could spread to the countryside The city was surrounded by troops and the leaders of the movement, including the Afghan postmaster, arrested

As remarked elsewhere the Afghan attack, although a failure, was followed by widespread disturbances, presenting a more serious problem than the Afghan War itself The infection of the Frontier with Indian politics added to the complications Moslem India broke into angry recriminations over the vindictive peace terms the Allies sought to impose on prostrate Turkey The Khilafat or pro-Turkish party, in

alliance with Congress, raised Moslem resentment to fever pitch The preaching of the Ali brothers brought on a savage uprising of the Moplah Moslems in Malabar, directed mainly against the Hindus, who were subjected to horrible atrocities Another result was the *hijrat* movement Thousands of misguided Moslems were led to believe that it was a crime to live any longer under British rule, responsible as it was for the downfall of the empire of the Khilafat India had become a *Darulharb* (abode of war), it was their religious duty to give up everything and go on pilgrimage (*hijrat*) to a *Darul Salam* (abode of peace), to a land of true believers Those who decided to make the sacrifice moved across into Afghanistan through the Peshawar district and up the Khyber Their example and the fanatical preaching of mullahs led thousands of Pathans from the Peshawar district to sell their lands for a song and follow the vanguard of the earlier pilgrims up the Khyber into Afghanistan The unfortunate exiles were soon disillusioned , the Kabul government had no use for the dupes of the Indian political agitator They had to return in the blazing heat of the summer to their own villages , many died on the way Every effort was made to reinstate the Pathan pilgrims in their lands by means of conciliation committees Government was exposed to a good deal of criticism for allowing the movement to develop, especially on the Frontier It would, of course, have been difficult to interfere in a religious movement of the kind once it had made headway

Congress and Khilafat propaganda and the resultant disturbances naturally had an unsettling effect on the border A grievance of the frontier intellectual

was the exclusion of the North-West Frontier Province from the reforms of 1920–1 on the grounds that in view of the close association of the tribesmen of the settled districts with the tribal hinterland it was essential to keep the administration in official hands The close relation of the province with the problem of defence in India could not be overlooked

Another disturbing factor was the situation in Afghanistan. The delay in the conclusion of a treaty of peace with the Amir inspired the hope of fresh trouble in the intransigent on both sides of the Durand line In the Afghan province of Khost adjacent to Waziristan several hundreds of deserters from the North and South Waziristan Militias with their rifles were sheltering under the ægis of Afghan officialdom Most of them had enlisted in a Khost Militia for which recruits were being invited from British tribes In 1920 and 1921 these refugees committed a series of outrages in British territory On two occasions they cut up detachments of Indian troops, capturing 100 rifles , they ambushed Militia patrols Despite the fact that Mahsud country was occupied by strong military forces, what might almost be described as a reign of terror, prevailed in the Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan districts Altogether there were 391 raids on the Frontier in 1920–1, in which 153 persons were killed The situation improved with the signature of the peace treaty with Afghanistan in the following year The tribes, too, were beginning to realize that the military grip of Britain on the Afghan Frontier was as strong as ever About this time the repudiation of the Khilafat or religious headship of Islam by Mustafa Kemal, the Turkish dictator, diminished the

influence of the pro-Turkish party Intensive bombing finally induced the recalcitrant sections of the Mahsuds to accept the Government peace terms In the north the Afridis had thrown in their hand and were co-operating in the construction of the railway through the Khyber Pass Afridi Khassadars had on several occasions prevented raids into the Peshawar district

The political atmosphere improved still further when the government of India at long last decided that the non-co-operative movement must be checked Gandhi was arrested, tried and imprisoned In 1925 the Khyber railway was opened The allowances paid to the Afridis had been increased some years earlier on account of the added responsibility of protecting the work in progress They had expected a further increase after the opening of the railway, but this was not forthcoming, a fresh disappointment was the refusal of Government to reconstitute the Khyber Rifles There was one friendly gesture, an offer to enlist 900 Afridis in the Army

Fanatical influences have been, if anything, more persistent of late years than in the pre-War period The Haji of Turangzai was largely responsible for the troubles in Mohmand country, other mullahs from the Afghan side were his willing allies Mullah Saiyyid Akbar, the stormy petrel of Tirah, saw in the Khyber railway an opportunity of working up hostility to Government, the railway was, he proclaimed, a threat not only to Islam but to tribal independence He collected a large following, but the more sober elements stood aloof, and the mullah's *lashkar* finally dispersed without committing itself

There was trouble with the Mohmands in 1927 engineered by a new aspirant to religious ascendancy, the Faqir of Alingar, a *talib* or disciple of a notorious Afghan priest, known as the Sandaqi mullah The Faqir soon attained an unenviable notoriety On the first occasion of his attempt to provoke the British he was ambitious enough to proclaim a *jihad* Fortunately the Haji of Turangzai, jealous of a new rival, refused his co-operation The Faqir, however, succeeded in getting a *lashkar* of 2,000 men together, with which he moved towards the Peshawar border Discouraged by a bombing attack from the air, and by lack of support from the Lower Mohmands, the *lashkar* melted away and for the time being the Faqir faded into the background

The extent to which British influence and control had been re-established in the Khyber and Tirah was shown in the spring of 1923 by the action taken as a result of political pressure by the Afridi tribes against the Kohat Pass murder gang responsible for the murder of Mrs Ellis and the kidnapping of her daughter The gang was outlawed by its fellow-tribesmen and so harried that it was compelled to cross the Durand line and take refuge in Afghanistan, where most of its members were interned in a remote province

During this period the rise to power of Mian Gul Shahzada, Wali of Swat, was of good augury for the peace of the northern border of Peshawar This remarkable man, who is a grandson of the Akhund of Swat, a well-known religious leader of half a century ago, has within the past twenty years welded into a kingdom the Swat and Buner tribes, including the

tribes on the right bank of the Swat river, originally under the suzerainty of the Nawab of Dir Lately he has extended his rule to the Indus Kohistan bordering on Kashmir He owes his success to some extent to the hereditary religious influence of his family, but mainly to a strong personality. In 1926 he was recognized by the British government and formally proclaimed ruler of Swat at a public durbar held at Saidu, his capital, by the Chief Commissioner of the Frontier Province Twenty-five years ago such an incident would have appeared incredible An agreement was signed by the Wali by which he pledged himself to loyalty and service to the Crown and agreed to respect the territory of his neighbour, the Nawab of Amb, a British feudatory on the Hazara border He has established a strong government and maintains an efficient military force Realizing the difficulty of governing a population armed to the teeth he has recently initiated a policy of disarmament with considerable success Outlaws are excluded from his country

The comparative calm in the political atmosphere that followed on the arrest of Gandhi disappeared beneath a fresh wave of agitation as a result of the appointment of the Simon Commission and the reappearance of Gandhi on the political scene About the same time intense communal feeling was excited in Tirah by a Hindu-Moslem clash in India over what was known as the Rangila Rasul case Moslem feeling throughout India had been raised by a scurrilous publication in which the Prophet was held up to ridicule The author was a Hindu He was prosecuted by government and sentenced to a short

term of imprisonment During the hearing of his appeal a young Moslem shot him dead in the court-room The murderer was hanged in Karachi A huge Moslem mob collected with the object of seizing the body and giving it a public funeral. If it had not been held up and dispersed by British troops it would probably have burnt and looted the city Anti-Hindu feeling developed so strongly in Tirah at this insult to Islam that the Afridis expelled all Hindus from their limits. They were stoned and otherwise ill-treated and had to be shepherded down the Khyber by Government levies A little later when the irritation had died down they were allowed to return The Hindu client or dependant is a necessity of economic life in Tirah The incident is worth recording, indicating as it does the quick reactions across the border to remote happenings in India where the honour of Islam is concerned

The revival of political agitation in India in 1927 provided an even greater stimulus to border unrest than the fanaticism of religious leaders Opportunities in the transborder agencies for primary education, with a small leavening of higher education, had helped to awaken interest among the tribes in the politics of the Frontier Province and of India generally The borderland is losing its isolation as a result of British road-making policy For the past ten or twelve years there has been a network of motor roads in Waziristan , a Wazir or Mahsud who, before the roads were made, took several days to get to Bannu can now do the journey in a lorry in a single day The Haji of Turangzai (he died recently) used to publish a newspaper appropriately styled *The Flame* , doubt-

less it will not be long before the Pathan in his hill fortress will have Moscow's gospel in his own language, the Japanese idea of the British, perhaps even Mussolini's messages from Bari. From what they have been hearing for years past in the Frontier bazars and elsewhere they not unnaturally conclude that British power is on the wane, could there be better evidence of growing weakness than that the British should have handed over power in India to the Brahmin? Pathan mentality could not be expected to grasp the idea of a partnership of Briton and Indian, designed to lead India along the path to complete self-government.

As already observed the reforms of 1920 were not extended to the Frontier Province. The Hindu Congress soon decided to exploit in their own interests the discontent on this account among the Pathan intelligentsia. It was obvious that the situation could not be met by a mere denial, and the Simon Commission was in 1928 instructed to take up the question of constitutional advance in some form in the province. The Commission, after a thorough enquiry, recommended a Council more or less of the Morley-Minto type with elected and nominated members in about equal proportions. The elected members would be chosen by a special constituency of big land-holders (Khans) and by municipal and district boards (corresponding roughly to the British county council). Legislative powers would be limited, law and order in particular being reserved.

The proposal to confine reform in the province to a constitution so strictly limited increased rather than allayed the irritation among the politically minded

in the province Congress emissaries poured into the province, Congress money was made available for political purposes both within and beyond the border Gandhi and his lieutenants must have been well aware that they were, in the metaphor of the Simon Commission, playing with fire in a powder magazine, they were prepared to risk anything in order to embarrass the British government An organization known officially as the Red Shirts, but which its members prefer to call *Khudai Khidmatgaran*, the Servants of God, was now formed with a fanatical, bitterly anti-British Pathan, Abdul Ghaffar, as its leader, who, by the way, is brother-in-law of the Haji of Turangzai, the outlaw priest, his brother, Dr Khan Sahib, has been his principal coadjutor, a retired officer of the Indian Medical Service, educated at Edinburgh University and married to an Englishwoman Intensive efforts were made by the Congress emissaries to embroil the tribes with Government as the best means of undermining the British position Abdul Ghaffar preached sedition along the Frontier, especially among the Wazirs of Bannu and the Mohmands Congress agitators penetrated into the Black Mountain, Red Shirt agents preached war against the British in Dir, Bajaur and in the protected areas of the Malakand The Nawab of Dir attempted loyally to keep his tribes in check, the virus of anti-British preaching was too strong for him The tribesmen broke out and burnt three British levy posts on the Chitral road Military assistance was necessary before order could be restored The anti-British elements in Bajaur and Mohmand country inspired and stimulated by religious fanatics

like the Faqir of Alingar were only too ready to ally themselves with the Red Shirts To them it was a heaven-sent opportunity to shake the foundations of the British Raj The Faqir of Alingar, as always, quickly had a *lashkar* on foot in Bajaur , again he was frustrated by the British air force, which suddenly swooped down on his not too enthusiastic following which soon dispersed

One could hardly expect the Afridi to measure events dispassionately The insolent threats of the Hindu Congress, the "salt march" of the little "naked Faqir" to the sea with his despised crowd of Hindu disciples to manufacture salt in defiance of the law—to Pathan tribesmen eagerly discussing Indian politics in their mosques and village clubs, could this mean anything less than the crumbling of the British Empire? The Sahibs were not in the habit of dealing with the virile Pathan with such mildness , only in the last extremity could they so debase themselves before the Hindu Faqir Surely the Sikhs, the Gurkhas and Panjabi Musulmans would no longer fight for the nerveless Empire , British armies would no longer reinforce the weak garrisons on the Frontier , now was the time to strike a blow for Islam and the honour of the Pathan Meanwhile in the Peshawar district itself the Red Shirts had established what was almost a parallel government In April 1930 there was serious rioting in the city, the indecision of the authorities led to a dangerous outbreak and the city had to be occupied by the military News of these happenings was magnified across the border into a general rising , the Afridis were assured that they would be welcomed on every

side The temptation was too great to be resisted, they swarmed down in thousands into the district in the late summer and favoured by the shelter of high maize crops practically laid siege to Peshawar They soon discovered that the British lion was less decrepit than they had imagined The support promised them was not forthcoming, they had the uncomfortable feeling that they might at any moment have to face guns, cavalry and aeroplanes Aeroplanes were in fact soon flying over them They had no intention of being used as a catspaw by selfish politicians, it was not long before they were back in their hills Retribution followed in the cooler months South-west of Peshawar is an extensive plain, flanking the foothills, broken by nullahs, known as the Khajuri plain, on which the Afridis rely for grazing when their hills are snow-bound There are some villages on the plain, for long the haunt of outlaws Obviously the occupation by troops of this block of Afridi territory would increase the British hold over the tribes It was decided to annex the plain and so make its use for grazing subject to good behaviour There was some fighting, but the Afridis were not prepared for a long resistance, the economic factor was too strong Exclusion from Peshawar with the consequent loss of labour, the mustering out of the Afridis recently enlisted in the army, the heavy mortality among their cattle owing to the denial of grazing in the Khajuri plain, all this made them bitterly regret that they had allowed themselves to be influenced by the politics of the settled districts There was no great cause to defend, the story of a deserted Peshawar and a welcoming

population of their tribesmen had proved to be a myth

For the first time in nearly a century of British rule has the Frontier capital been attacked and threatened, not by a foreign enemy, but by tribesmen in theory subjects of the British Crown Never in history has sedition been allowed such complete freedom to paralyse authority It may be argued that such a policy, aimed as it was at disarming suspicion of British intentions, was really a sign of overwhelming strength, could the Afridis be expected to put this construction on the passivity of Government? "Why," they might ask, "should the Sahibs impose such a handicap on themselves if they really wanted a peaceful border?" The Pathans of the settled districts were equally lacking in insight, in fact many of them imagined that Government wished them to join the Red Shirts Despite the Delhi agreement between Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy, and Mr Gandhi, by which the latter pledged Congress to suspend their activities in 1931 while he was attending the Round Table Conference in London, Abdul Ghaffar continued his subversive propaganda The Indian government still refused to allow his arrest and towards the close of 1931 the Frontier Province was almost in a state of insurrection At long last the local authorities were permitted to strike a blow for law and order On the evening of Boxing Night 1931 large bodies of troops working with the police and constabulary by a series of secret movements surrounded the important Red Shirt centres and arrested nearly a thousand of the Red Shirt leaders There was some trouble afterwards, in Kohat, for example, large bodies of

tribesmen of the district came into collision with troops and had to be dispersed by firing It is worth noting that Congress propaganda extended as far as the Afghan province of Khost, where the Zadran and Mangal tribes at one time planned to attack the Turis of the Kurram Valley because as Shiahs they were loyal to the British government and hated as recusants by all good Sunnis In Bannu itself and on the district borders, according to the reports of local officers, there was little doubt that many of the tribesmen were only waiting for the moment when the Government was in their opinion sufficiently embarrassed for them to commence a campaign of disorder and crime on both sides of the administrative border Conditions were similar on the Dera Ismail Khan side

These strong measures on the Frontier, combined with the action taken in India generally in 1932 to restrain the subversive activities of Congress, brought comparative tranquillity to the province Obviously the reactions of Indian politics on the Frontier have caused a setback to the policy of peaceful penetration Whether it was sound policy on the part of British statesmen to imperil the security of the great Imperial Frontier in order to convince political India of the sincerity of the pledges given to lead Indians along the path of self-government is a question for the future historian The kidnapped Hindu languishing in a Mahsud cave, a Pathan family in a British village bereaved of its menfolk as a result of a Red Shirt collision with Government troops, might well feel that they were paying too heavy a penalty for the benefit of the ambitious Brahmin politician

The disturbing influence of Indian politics on the life of the Frontier has, if anything, increased in intensity during the past three or four years The Frontier Province was a pawn in the political game at the Round Table Conference To the eighty million Moslems of India representative government modelled on British lines was a direct threat to their existence The political movement in India has throughout been a caste Hindu movement Caste Hindus outnumbered Moslems by more than two to one , they were far better educated, better organized, they commanded most of the wealth of the country, they predominated in the services If Britain gave them what they wanted the Moslems, erstwhile rulers of India, would decline to the position of helots under a Brahmin autocracy They were determined to preserve their culture, their traditions, their religion The first essential was communal representation, which would give them their full voting value on a population basis , further there must be protection for minority interests Apart from the maintenance of the British connexion the Moslem leaders felt that those interests could only be guaranteed if Moslem governments were assured by a communal quota in provinces where Moslems were in the majority, in Sindh, the Panjab, Bengal and the North-West Frontier Sindh must be separated from Bombay and given a separate government , the North-West Frontier must have the 1920 reforms at once and the new constitution to be conferred on the rest of India With the martial races of the Frontier, Sindh and the Panjab and the great province of Bengal under Moslem control, the moral weight of Moslem India might act

as a deterrent against Hindu injustice to Moslem minorities in provinces where the government was in Hindu hands Whether there should be communal representation or not was in fact a major issue at the London conference Attempts by Indian politicians at a settlement failed and responsibility for a decision had ultimately to be thrown on the British government Despite the incongruity of communal electorates in a democratic form of government they decided, overriding Hindu objections, that representation must be on a communal basis, Moslems gained their point here, and in order further to conciliate their good will the 1920 reforms were immediately conferred on the Frontier Province, and the promise given that it should stand on the same footing as the rest of India as regards complete self-government And yet two or three years earlier British statesmen of outstanding reputation serving on the Simon Commission had emphasized the impossibility in Imperial interests of handing over law and order to a popular ministry [1] How could the wild Pathan of the hills explain such an abdication except on the theory that the British were awaiting an opportunity of clearing out of India?

In 1932 the North-West Frontier was elevated to the status of an Indian province The first Minister was Sir Abdul Qaiyyum, a retired Frontier political officer of great experience and ability, ready to work in close touch with British officials Law and order remained in official hands Here it may be observed that despite his services to the Province on the London Conference, despite his experience and his enthusiasm for the political advance of his community, Sir Abdul

Qaiyyum's appointment was not popular He had been too long a power behind the throne, suspected for too long of a greater responsibility for the acts of the administration than was really the case, to command general support from the electorate

Meanwhile fresh troubles were developing on the Mohmand border According to local official reports the temper of the tribe had been kept uncertain and menacing by the spectacle of the extraordinary Red Shirt proceedings in the Peshawar district Despite this, however, up to March 1932 the political authorities had succeeded in avoiding an open breach with any section of the tribe The outstanding feature of the situation was, as in 1931, the close interrelation between the Red Shirts and the anti-British elements among both British and Afghan Mohmands Abdul Ghaffar had himself addressed *jirgahs* of the lower Mohmands (Halimzai and Tarakzai) A Red Shirt party was started in the tribe, by a curious paradox the slogans of the Hindu revolutionary were heard in the Afghan hills The arrest of the Red Shirt leaders brought the trouble to a head In January 1932 the Faqir of Alingar with a small *lashkar* visited the Gandab valley in lower Mohmand country and tried to persuade the so-called "assured clans" to renounce their service to Government in the Khassadars and levies for border protection as a preliminary to an invasion of the Peshawar district Fortunately for the British authorities they declined to respond to the summons The Faqir of Alingar's force was augmented by 200 Red Shirts from the Peshawar district, followed by a fresh deputation of the faction to the Faqir in the hope of inducing him to declare

a *jihad* among the Bajaur tribes The Faqir was only too eager to respond and early in March 1932 a *lashkar* of 2,000 Mamunds and other Bajauris collected and threatened the north-western border of Peshawar As usual the *lashkar* lacked cohesion and leadership, and a sudden bombing attack drove the tribesmen to their homes On this occasion the fort of the Haji of Turangzai was bombed Despite Red Shirt machinations and the blandishments of the Faqir, responsible opinion among the lower Mohmands (Tarakzai, Halimzai) was opposed to a policy of provoking a collision with Government They refused to credit the assertion that the British intended to annex their country All which tends to show that the policy of peaceful penetration has not been entirely unsuccessful where conditions are not unfavourable

For eighteen years, despite incessant provocation, the Government had not moved a single soldier across the Mohmand border Now in 1933 it was felt that a demonstration must be made in order to support the lower Mohmands (the assured clans) in their friendly attitude At their request troops were moved into the Gandab and a road was built into the interior in order to facilitate military operations in the future The upper Mohmands soon agreed to cease hostilities and the troops were withdrawn, Government pledging itself not to build fortifications of any kind

It was not long before the peace was broken and in less than two years at the instigation of Badshah Gul, son of the Haji of Turangzai, the upper Mohmands repudiated their undertakings and resumed their anti-British activities In particular Mohmand gangs working in with Peshawar outlaws harboured by the

Haji of Turangzai terrorized the Peshawar district In September 1934 the Faqir of Alingar was again on the warpath, encroaching on the preserves of his rival the Haji by starting a preaching tour in lower Mohmand country with the idea of inducing the Halimzai and Tarakzai to destroy the Gandab road The Haji stood aloof as he was afraid that if a fresh invasion of Mohmand country were forced on Government they might take the opportunity of carrying the road over the Nahakki Pass, through upper Mohmand country and Bajaur to the Chitral–Malakand road Such a road would turn the flank of the Haji's position and bring the excitable tribes of the Kandaharis, Safis and Mamunds under some degree of control The Halimzai opposed the Faqir , a further cold douche was furnished by the declaration of a blockade against the Safis and Kandaharis, in whose country the Haji has his headquarters Disruptive forces, however, overcame caution , the direct provocation to Government was too strong to be passed over in silence and in September 1935 an invasion in force was ordered There was some heavy fighting in which many of the Afghan Mohmands joined Unfortunately Government was not prepared to push the Gandab road through to Bajaur and on to the Malakand–Chitral road and very little was gained from the operations The road was, however, extended to the foot of the Nahakki Pass

Tirah had felt the economic pinch caused by the world-wide depression The Afridis are a hard-headed lot with a sense of the practical realities of life , brooding over the consequences of their last clash with Government, the loss of lucrative contracts,

the annexation of the Khajuri plain, the denial of service in the army and of other opportunities, they were beginning to feel that their economic interests lay in a better understanding with Government It soon appeared that responsible opinion in Tirah favoured a *rapprochement* with the British authorities, who on their side saw in the improved attitude of the tribes an opportunity of initiating in Tirah the policy of peaceful penetration adopted in Waziristan after the war of 1919–20 At a special *jirgah* in January 1935 the tribesmen agreed to the opening up of their country The main terms of the agreement were as follows

(*a*) Roads to be built into the heart of Tirah
(*b*) Recruitment in the army to be reopened after the roads had penetrated a sufficient distance into their country to prove Afridi good faith
(*c*) Government would refrain from interference in the internal, social and political affairs of the tribes
(*d*) The roads would not be used during tribal good behaviour for the movement of regular or irregular troops.

A school was to be built at Chora in the Bazar valley at the request of the Malikdin Kheyl elders Road contracts and road maintenance generally would be in tribal hands The agreement was endorsed by the *maliks* and elders of the tribes concerned and tacitly acquiesced in by several thousands of the *Kashars* or junior member of the clans The school was built, work was started on the road, to all appearances a great diplomatic victory had

been won But trouble was looming on the horizon Once again political reactions from India were to stultify the efforts at pacification of the Frontier authorities The India Act had been passed in the autumn of 1935, and with it came a revival of agitation in the provinces of India An unsettled border was a Congress asset, anything that looked like first steps towards pacification would enhance British prestige, it must be strongly opposed Naturally the policy of the Afridi *maliks* had its opponents, under Congress stimulus they soon made headway A faction known as the *Sarishta* or unity party was formed in opposition to the *maliks*, mostly under mullah leadership Picquets were posted on the road to obstruct the working, the school at Chora was burnt Road-making operations had to be stopped and the agreement held in suspense until the tribes should combine to ensure performance of its conditions

The renewal of intrigues across the border by Congress and Red Shirt agitators spread to Waziristan and the south with an equally prejudicial effect on the work of the political authorities in pacifying the countryside For ten years unwonted tranquillity had prevailed in Waziristan The occupation of Razmak and Wana by the regular forces, the network of motor roads policed by tribal levies had increased British political influence over the tribes generally and made them more amenable to control Local political officers were optimistic about the future, with powerful forces garrisoning their country the Mahsuds were showing a disposition to accept the inevitable and to settle down, reluctantly perhaps,

to an existence based on their own resources, supplemented by Government allowances and Government service The efforts of British officers to improve and stimulate agricultural production and the general development of the country were a strong civilizing influence That the hope of inducing Mahsud and Wazir to throw in their lot with India should have been shattered by irresponsible agitators was little short of a tragedy British India has itself to thank in having to foot a bill which has already run into a million and a half sterling to pay for military operations forced on Government by the outbreak of hostilities in the south of the province

The Mahsuds were not responsible in the first instance At a moment when fanaticism had been excited on both sides of the border by the action of the Sikhs in demolishing the Shahid Ganj mosque in Lahore there occurred a dispute in Bannu over a Hindu girl, alleged to have been converted to Islam, which raised religious feeling among the Pathans on both sides of the Bannu border to fever pitch The girl had been kidnapped by a Pathan who claimed that he had married her She was placed in safe custody by the authorities pending settlement of the claim of her parents that she should be restored to their guardianship A great demonstration by Bannu Pathans was worked up with a view to overawing the authorities, when that failed similar efforts were made beyond the border with the assistance of the Faqir of Ipi. Ultimately the girl was restored to her parents

The widespread disturbances in Waziristan which developed from these small beginnings have been

described in another chapter They illustrate the danger the British government has to face from this new factor of political reactions from British India on the tribes The close association of the hostile movement in Waziristan with Indian politics is demonstrated further by the fact that the Faqir of Ipi announced his readiness to make peace provided the Hindu girl were restored to her Moslem husband , that the Shahid Ganj mosque were rebuilt, and that Government should pledge itself not to interfere in religious disputes through its law courts

Another example of the baneful influence of Indian politics across the border was furnished by events in the Black Mountain on the Hazara border Early in 1936 tribal fanaticism was excited by the news of the Shahid Ganj mosque episode Tribal *lashkars* collected and attacked British posts and village bazars The invaders gave out that their object was to destroy a Hindu *dharam-sala* or chapel in retaliation for the demolition of the mosque in Lahore

Of late years public opinion in India has shown some interest in the politics of the Frontier. The Hindu Congress, as has been seen, have for their own purpose sought to create embarrassment for the British in that explosive countryside ; indeed there can be little doubt that they were prepared to provoke an insurrection of the tribes both of the settled districts and the hinterland in the hope of weakening British military power To their view the Frontier problem is a figment of British imagination imposed on India in order that Britain may find a valid excuse for her military protectorate and imperialistic ambitions Were the destiny of India in Congress

hands they would settle the Frontier problem by extending the hand of friendship to the tribes and making them feel it was worth while to join the Hindu in creating a new heaven and a new earth in India Do they really believe that the hatred and contempt of fanatical Moslems for the Hindu can be so easily exorcized? Gandhi reflects the same attitude. The difficulties which the British government have found insoluble would vanish if only the gospel of non-violence could exercise its magic appeal in the border hills Only let him send his lieutenant Abdul Ghaffar to the Frontier, withdraw the troops from Waziristan, the Congress emissary would within a week have the tribes under complete control Abdul Ghaffar, who wears the emblem of the hammer and sickle, is more modest, he told an English journalist recently that if the British government would supply him with the necessary funds, he would tame the border in five years by opening dispensaries and founding schools In the Central Legislative Assembly Hindu opinion, as apart from Congress opinion, generally refuses to admit that the Frontier problem is an Indian problem, like the Congress, the so-called moderate Hindu regards it as imperial in the worst sense of the term Eliminate British imperialism and it would cease to exist The attitude is typical of the disinclination of political India to face realities On the other hand the Hindu Mahasabha, a powerful organization of orthodox caste Hindu, regards the Afghan borderland as a standing menace to Hinduism Militant Islam in Afghanistan and on the border might, they feel, build up a powerful Moslem State which, absorbing their co-religionists the fighting

tribes of the Panjab, might once again impose Moslem rule on the north of India The leader of this Hindu group, Dr Moonjee, recently opened a military school in the Bombay presidency reserved exclusively for Hindus [1]

The Moslem world of India takes a very different view Moslems dislike the new constitution even more than do the Hindu Congress The British have, they maintain, sold them to the Hindu politician whose dominant idea is to eliminate Islam from India The one hope of salvation is to keep the Frontier as a stronghold of Islam To Moslems of this school of thought the idea of pacification is anathema They would leave the Pathan of the hills to his wild independence They would bring together the two wings of the Pathan nation, the tribes of the hills and of the plains, kept apart for their own ends by British Imperialists This view would appear to coincide to some extent with the ideas of Dr Khan Sahib (Premier since 1938 of the Provincial ministry), who as representative of the Frontier told the Central Assembly last March that the border tribes were uniting to establish a republic He was probably thinking of the intrigues of the Red Shirt and Congress groups with the *Sarishta* party in Tirah Unified political control by a Pathan government up to the Durand line, either as a province of India or a separate republic, seems to be his idea The inevitable conclusion from this welter of conflicting theories and principles is that it is an imperative necessity that the British government should devise a policy with the object of ultimately absorbing the Frontier into the polity of India The difficulties will be

almost insuperable without the support of at least a strong majority of political India.

In deciding to confer self-government on the Frontier province the British government can hardly have imagined that in that essentially Moslem country (96 per cent of the population are Moslem) there was the least prospect of the seizure of power by the Hindu Congress, with the strong anti-British bias characteristic of the party The landholding class (the Khans) might well be expected to put up a fight against disruptive elements and establish a reasonably conservative government that would fall into line with official policy If the authorities had any such hope they were speedily disillusioned Congress and its Red Shirt allies had been given ample time and opportunity to build up their organization in the villages , credulous peasants had been duped with promises of greatly reduced land revenue and rents , only the Red Shirts and Congress could protect Islam against the imperial ambitions of Britain The unpopularity of Sir Abdul Qaiyyum, leader of the moderates, both personally and as a supposed Government man, weakened the opposition to Congress intrigues Even so Congress, though it emerged from the election struggles as the strongest party with nineteen members out of fifty, did not succeed in obtaining an absolute majority Only in Bannu did it fail to make an impression , there anti-Hindu feeling was too strong even with the Red Shirt camouflage As already noted, in Peshawar, not content with their election campaign, Congress carried the attack on the British across the border, and by persuading the *Sarishta* party among the Afridis that

Government intended to build the Tirah road system by force, induced them to stop road-making operations

It will be recalled that at the outset Congress decided not to take office under the new constitution and as a consequence Sir Abdul Qaiyyum succeeded in forming a government, with the reluctant support of non-party Moslems and the Hindu-Sikh national party of seven members He was immediately swept from power by Dr Khan Sahib and his followers when Congress decided to form ministries last August The Hindu-Sikh party decided to throw in their lot with Congress, it really holds the balance of power

A curious aspect of the Frontier problem is the unnatural alliance of the Hindu Congress with militant Islam The two parties have, it is true, a common enemy, in what they regard as the monster of British imperialism, is that a strong enough link to hold them together? In the rest of British India some seventy million Moslems execrate the very name of Congress, the cry now is that Britain has sold the Moslem to the Hindu The truth is that neither party is sincere Congress is exploiting Pathan fanaticism to weaken the British Raj, Pathan extremists on the other hand are merely using the Congress, its organization and resources to get political power in their own hands As a leading Moslem daily told its readers recently Congress Raj in the North-West Frontier is Pathan Raj, not Hindu, no matter how loudly Dr Khan Sahib and his acolytes may sing *Bande Mataram*, the Congress national anthem, no matter how they flaunt the Congress flag!

The situation is full of dangerous complications It is true that the Governor of the province, as agent to the Viceroy, is solely responsible for the tribal hinterland , he does not depend for the necessary finance on the local ministry He needs more than that Unless he has the full co-operation of the Minister responsible for law and order it would be almost impossible for him to guarantee the security of the Frontier and the immunity of the administered area from tribal aggression Red Shirts and Congress during the past four or five years have, as has been seen, intrigued incessantly transborder Will they change their tactics now that their own Minister is responsible for law and order and for playing his part in protecting exposed villages ? That remains to be seen, and it remains to be seen whether these little Soviets can be controlled from the Centre The former dyarchic government suspended the use of the Frontier Crimes Regulation in deference to the young intelligentsia and lawyers, who considered the use of old-time methods of settling disputes a slur on their social standards The irresponsibility of Congress politicians was illustrated recently when a bill was introduced into the Assembly with the object of repealing all so-called repressive laws, relating mostly to preventive action The ministry allowed the bill to go through despite the horrible tale of murders in the province and the restlessness along the Waziristan border In the interests of India generally the Governor was compelled to refuse to assent to the bill

The bias of the Congress party against the landed aristocracy is shown by the abolition of the honorary

magistracy, of which the majority of the members were Khans It is true that the latter frequently abused their powers, but their elimination will weaken the local administration It is certain that the Frontier ministry will expect to have some influence on Government relations with the trans-border tribes, their policy would be opposed to strong measures Their capacity for secret intrigue across the border through their village committees is endless The ministry holds itself responsible for maintaining border peace and strongly criticizes the government of India for allowing the present state of terrorism on the Bannu border Dr Khan Sahib has recently toured the villages in that neighbourhood to reassure the people His proposal is to arm every adult villager, which would provide him with a strong irregular army It must not be forgotten that he is related by marriage to the late Haji of Tarangzai whose son, Badshah Gul, is recognized as spiritual head of the uppon Mohmand and Majaur tribes His brother, Abdul Ghaffar, did not hesitate to incite the Mohmands against British rule The brothers may adopt a less extreme policy now that power has been transferred into their hands, but it is straining credulity to expect that they will suddenly smother their hate of the "alien" British and work with them to pacify the border Their position is insecure, which may inspire moderation, it might of course have the opposite effect Their main difficulty is finance As already observed, the province does not pay its way, it has to depend for its subsistence on the generosity of the central government Provincial revenues amount roughly to

£600,000, to balance its budget the central government provides a sum of £750,000 Administration is far more expensive than in India generally, not only as regards police but in other departments, such as education, medical and public works In such circumstances the ministry can only be generous to the peasant on the Frontier at the expense of the Indian peasant generally, who is much worse off than the Frontier villager The Finance Minister proposes to cut down the police budget, which seems a dangerous proceeding having regard to the state of crime, should he do so the central government might justifiably claim that the subvention took into account the necessity of a large police force, if a reduction were possible the saving should accrue to the benefit of central finance It is of course anomalous that a province that cannot raise even a half of the revenue necessary for its administration should have to bear the cost of a ministry and a secretariat with all the usual departments Some economy might be possible in this direction The land revenue is probably in some cases too high, especially on the smaller holdings, there might be gradual reductions It would seem then that the Congress government will find some difficulty in appeasing its disappointed supporters A protesting mob of 10,000 Pathans invading the Assembly Room at Peshawar would be a more difficult proposition than a peasant mob of similar strength in Nagpur, Patna or Lucknow The method of inciting the countryside against the British government is wearing thin, to split Pathan society by embroiling the Pathan villager with the Khan would ultimately weaken the Congress position The

Moslem League has its adherents in the province, their object will be to tear down and trample the Congress flag wherever they meet it Altogether the omens for a smooth and successful term of office before the Congress ministry are not encouraging They will have to move slowly and cautiously, the only line of safety—and one might say of real progress —is close collaboration with the British government

The fact that the ministry a month or so ago placed on the Governor the onus of preventing the bill repealing the preventive section of the criminal procedure code from becoming law is not a favourable omen, Dr Khan Sahib, too, must have known that the Governor could not allow a confiscatory measure like the Teri Dues Repeal Bill to stand unchallenged, it was too obviously an attempt to penalize a great landowner with the object of attracting the votes of the peasantry The Governor's action has been heavily attacked by Congress supporters both within and outside the Assembly, so far efforts to bring on a crisis have been staved off by Dr Khan Sahib, who evidently does not feel sure of his ground

The political atmosphere in the provinces is indeed unhealthy for a Congress ministry, depending as it does on an unstable element for its majority The unrest in Waziristan with its reactions in the border districts is an added complication It might very well complain that its difficulties are enhanced by its friends as well as by its opponents The Congress Committee in the province is too inclined to take matters into its own hands through its village councils, its recent action in appointing a committee to tour the Frontier and report on measures necessary to

secure the protection of life and property is an implied criticism of the ministry In fact the activities of irresponsible politicians are embarrassing to Dr Khan Sahib and his colleagues and make friendly contacts with Government House increasingly difficult For them peace is essential if they are to make good Another embarrassment is the growing Hindu-Moslem communalism in Bannu, which even the declaration attributed by Abdul Ghaffar to Pandit Jawahir Lal Nehru during his Bannu visit, that the Faqir of Ipi is fighting a noble fight for independence, has done nothing to dissipate

Contrast Bannu with a third of its Hindu population in flight from the terror created by the Faqir of Ipi and his followers, with the tumultuous welcome given by thousands of young Pathans a month or so earlier, to Gandhi, the little naked Faqir of the Hindu Bania caste, for which the Frontier Pathan had up to then merely a patronizing, half-contemptuous tolerance Twenty thousand Pathans rent the welkin with the shout "*Malang baba zinda bad*" (Long live our beloved Faqir) Why, one might ask, should Pathans in their thousands pay homage to this Hindu ascetic and to his Hindu colleague Pandit Jawahir Lal Nehru? Is it not because of Gandhi's success in forcing the mighty British Empire to yield to the Congress attack? In other words, is it not an expression of their antipathy to alien rule? The astonishing paradox is explained by the fact that Pathans want national freedom irrespective of forms of government, if the little Bania helps them by his political mysticism to break the framework of British rule in India, they will accept his alliance to that

extent, no more They would never adopt the socialism of Jawahir Lal Nehru, they would never submit to Hindu rule in India

It may be noted here that at Mardan on the occasion of his recent visit Gandhi received a deputation of ten "representative men" from the Malakand agency, who requested him to use his good offices with the Indian government to bring about the fusion of the Malakand agency with the settled districts Is this a sign of the times? The representatives told Gandhi that there were 10,000 Red Shirts in the agency It would be interesting to know what the Wali of Swat and the Nawab of Dir would have to say about these "representatives" and their ideas The truculent hillmen of Bajaur would make uneasy allies of the Hindu-ridden government of Peshawar!

The inflammation of political opinion in the province has been stimulated by a great conference of 10,000 people under the auspices of the North-West Frontier Province Political Conference at Mansahra Here as usual the brunt of the criticism was directed against the British government Its policy in Palestine was condemned and a demand made for its immediate revocation, resolutions were passed declining participation in a European War on the side of Britain, stigmatizing the forward policy in Waziristan, especially the bombing of villages and demanding that the independence of the transfrontier people should be maintained On no account would Frontier Moslems agree to the federal scheme in the Government of India Act

In Bannu hatred of British rule finds still more violent expression Weekly after the Friday prayers

thousands invoke the aid of God for the destruction of British power and the liberation of Islam in Waziristan Feeling against Britain is inflamed by the spreading of false reports of the bombing of mosques. The tribes are, it is asserted, part of the Indian empire and should not be treated so barbarously by British troops This sort of thing could happen only under Congress Raj. Any other possible government in the Frontier Province would realize that such attacks on the central government must ultimately react on themselves

Against this is the anti-Congress agitation of the Moslem League in the province, the activities of the *Khaksars* who stand for Islam against Hinduism and especially the Hindu Congress They move about in military formation carrying the long-handled spade of the country, with which they present arms And, too, as already observed, there is the Khanate party ready to support the British up to a point, but doubtful of British support themselves

How bewildering must be this clash of political ideas and cross-currents of political feeling to the unsophisticated Pathan villager discussing the problems of life in his *hujrah* or village club on both sides of the border ! He never hears the British side of the case, the position of Britain is never explained to him He can hardly be blamed for believing the worst. What wonder that with concrete examples before his eyes, the one fixed idea he develops is that British power is crumbling and that Pathan nationalism must fight for its own in the chaos that must eventually follow

What will be the future policy of the British govern-

ment on the Frontier? That is one of the questions of the hour in India In the settled districts it can now only hope to influence the administration unless indeed its hand is forced and it is compelled reluctantly to resume control The sketch given in the preceding paragraphs of the recent relations of Government with the tribes and of the reactions of Frontier and Indian policies on the politics of the tribal hinterland, shows how difficult and complex is the problem Will the British government face it or let things slide in the hope of a more favourable climate of opinion in India? The possibility of a new line of action will be examined in a later chapter

Chapter VII

THE FRONTIER AND IMPERIAL STRATEGY

FOR fifty years before the War the Afghan Frontier had been a school of soldiering for the officers and men of the British and Indian armies Life in the outposts was spent in what were practically active service conditions ; beyond the administrative border troops were located in fortified enclosures, roads were patrolled , without an escort it was unsafe to venture far afield. Even in the more civilized life of the border cantonment there was an atmosphere of military preparedness With luck the keen young subaltern might suddenly find himself leading a company of infantry or a squadron of cavalry to round up a gang of outlaws and transfrontier tribesmen, perhaps waging an all-day battle, ending with a bayonet rush Or it might happen that at dinner at the Mess word would go round secretly that within an hour or so a column was to move across the border to carry out a surprise attack on the fort of some troublesome *malik* or outlaw whose cup of iniquity had been filled to overflowing With such opportunities and the added chance of a campaign at short intervals it is hardly surprising that the Frontier Force attracted some of the best material in the British army.

In the late 'nineties communications on the

Frontier were very defective Peshawar was the only border station linked by rail with India There was no road through the Kohat Pass connecting Kohat and Peshawar The Indus was crossed by ferry in the summer months on the way to Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan , in winter there were bridges of boats It was over a hundred miles by road from the rail-head to Bannu As a result in an extensive border campaign transport difficulties were enormous The Frontier Force was more or less mobile , when troops had to be brought across the Indus from distant stations transport had to be impressed from Panjab villages The Indian government had forgotten Napoleon's maxim that an army moves on its stomach Strangely enough the proponents of the forward policy had had a similar lapse and so had failed to envisage an emergency requiring the concentration of 50,000 troops on the Frontier to meet purely tribal attack Yet this is what happened in 1897 The evil consequences of this want of foresight were seen in the far-flung campaign along the Frontier that year in which between three or four divisions were engaged There was no available transport and bullocks, mules, ponies, camels, were seized promiscuously all over the Panjab and pushed across the Indus, generally in charge of their owners, who were sent shivering into the frozen hills without proper clothing or equipment Cattle were lost by the thousand on the Frontier hillsides , there was considerable mortality from pneumonia among the drivers Fortunately for the Indian government at that time there was no extremist politician to exploit the peasants' grievances , such treatment nowadays

would lead to insurrection Government took the lesson to heart and initiated new schemes to facilitate mobilization Transport corps were organized, a system of registration of cattle suitable for military transport was introduced The Indus was bridged and the broad gauge railway taken to Kohat From Kohat a narrow gauge was continued as far as the Kurram Valley The Kohat Pass Afridis were induced to allow a road to be constructed through their country. A railway was built to Bannu from Kalabagh, later extended to Tank near the Bhittanni border The cantonment of Nowshera was connected by rail with Dargai, at the foot of the Malakand The chaos of 1897 has not recurred, though in 1919 lack of motor transport was given as a reason for the failure of the British army to dictate peace at Kabul in the third Afghan War

In the half-century following the Indian Mutiny the Indian army had been allowed to fall much below the standard required by modern conditions There were indeed many first-class corps included in it, notably the Frontier Force regiments, Panjabi regiments, Gurkhas and most of the cavalry regiments, but the quality of the troops generally left much to be desired Fortunately for India the Empire's greatest soldier of the period, Lord Kitchener, took command of the Indian army in 1903, and at once set to work to reorganize it and bring it up to date The Frontier Force, up to that time permanently stationed on the Frontier, was broken up and the regiments removed to down-country stations, with the object of giving other regiments the opportunity of serving on the Frontier This was at first a very

trying experience for the rank and file recruited in the torrid climate of the south The rifle thief had his opportunities with such regiments and now and again the border tribesmen took heavy toll, but the policy undoubtedly improved the quality of the Indian troops ; but for Lord Kitchener and his reforms, only a few crack regiments in the Great War would have kept up the reputation of the Indian army

Lord Kitchener's policy of breaking up the Frontier Force has not escaped criticism It is argued that frontier warfare needs highly specialized training spread over a number of years , only the best type of recruit from the northern tribes is equal to the strain To expose down-country regiments to Frontier conditions is to invite trouble, especially if their composition happens to be an inferior type of Hindu the Hindu soldier is always a provocation to the fanatical Moslem of the Frontier A year or so ago the controversy was renewed in the London Press There is a good deal to be said on both sides The place of the Frontier Force is now filled to a great extent by the Frontier irregular corps, such as the Kurram Militia, the Tochi and South Waziristan Scouts They are fine corps with a fine type of officer They, like the old Frontier Force, are the first line of defence against the border tribesmen It might be sound policy to back them up with a few specially selected regiments permanently stationed in the Frontier hills Otherwise the obvious retort to the critics is that it is useless to recruit and maintain regiments not equal to strenuous service in the Frontier, since if they were called upon to oppose an

overseas invader or an army equipped and trained on modern lines in Afghanistan, the ordeal would be infinitely greater than in tribal warfare

Mechanized transport combined with road-making has greatly simplified military operations on the Frontier For example, it is possible to move the Chitral Reliefs by lorry with an escort of light tanks to the foot of the Lawarai Pass on the Chitral border The Pass (11,000 feet) is not yet traversed by a motor road The Mihtar of Chitral, it is true, has a few cars which were dragged across the snow of the Pass in defiance of the avalanches The narrow roads of Chitral wind perilously along cliffs and precipices and the high officer privileged to be driven recklessly by one of his Highness's sons along the mountain ledges would at times during his journey willingly descend several grades in the official scale to feel the firm earth beneath his feet again Here it may be noted that one can now fly from Chitral to Peshawar in four and a half hours, a journey which before flying took four or five days, an immense advantage from the point of view of Staff work

The danger of aggression from the north-west has been an obsession of the British military mind in India from the time of Warren Hastings in the 'eighties of the eighteenth century At that period there was a danger that Zaman Shah, King of Kabul, who held most of the Panjab, might attack the Nawab of Oudh, a British feudatory and subordinate ally A dozen years later the rumour of a French invasion gave sleepless nights to the British authorities in Calcutta Napoleon was, they were told, planning to emulate the achievements of the Greek Alexander

In 1839 the Indian government plunged into a crazy and disastrous war in Afghanistan with the object of setting up a vassal State against the Russians The lengthening shadow of Russian encroachment in Central Asia has given the Afghan Frontier its significance as an Imperial responsibility. In 1886, if the Panjdeh incident had led to war between Britain and Russia, Britain would have had to send two or three army corps to meet the Russian attack

This is explained largely by political developments in the province itself, where for the last three or four years there has been violent anti-British agitation which, not unnaturally, has had its repercussions across the border In tribal territory, as remarked elsewhere, there are three storm centres, Waziristan, Tirah, and Mohmand country with Bajaur All three have come to some extent under the influence of the extremist politician Despite improvements in communications and the use of modern armaments, aeroplanes, tanks, armoured cars, motor transport, nearly 40,000 men were required to deal with the recent disturbances in Waziristan though barely half the tribes were involved, a revolt in Tirah of all the tribes, Afridis and Orakzais would be still more formidable, nearly 30,000 troops were engaged in the Mohmand campaign of three years ago There is no reason why there should not be a concerted rising of these three tribal groups, obviously should this happen the greater part of the Indian army would be involved, leaving barely an adequate number of troops to maintain internal security In such an emergency how would a threat of invasion from the sea be encountered unless the defensive forces are increased or their fighting value enhanced?

In an international atmosphere tense with the threat of crisis the weight of responsibility for the defence of India lies more heavily than before on the shoulders of Britain Before the War there was no question of attack from the sea, thanks to the unchallenged supremacy of the Royal Navy The Navy no longer holds that proud position, it is challenged to-day at least from the air, and in a world war,

India, situated as she is midway between Europe and the Far East, might be caught between two fires if, as might easily happen, the bulk of the naval strength of Britain were fighting a life-and-death struggle in the North Sea and the Mediterranean Unless India could furnish substantial aid, the British fleet based on Singapore could not ward off an attack in force by Japan, especially if Italy had an air base on the Red Sea littoral and could create a diversion by an air attack on India, while the Japanese were engaging the British fleet It might go hard with India in such an emergency, especially if there were trouble in the north at the same time A strong Air Force based on Southern India could alone meet the crisis

The disposition of troops in India has in the past been influenced by two main considerations, the defence of the Frontier against Afghanistan and the border tribes and the possibility of a Russian invasion As a consequence the bulk of the Indian army is stationed in the Panjab and on the Frontier, there are no large concentrations of troops in the south except at Hyderabad, where there is roughly a division The reason for this is not, however, strategic, it is because by treaty Britain is pledged to maintain troops there for the protection of his Exalted Highness the Nizam

It is doubtful whether the principle of massing troops in the north conforms to sound strategy in modern conditions The danger of an attack from Russia has greatly diminished, Afghanistan is militarily stronger than in pre-War days, as observed already relations between Kabul and Simla have

never been more friendly Even if Russia were free from anxiety about her frontiers either on the east or west and could concentrate her forces for an attack on Afghanistan she would think twice before stirring up a hornets' nest in the Afghan hills The Russian armies might break down the resistance of the Afghan regular forces before British help could arrive, a guerrilla war with over half a million well-armed tribesmen in almost inaccessible hill country would make the invasion of India a very difficult proposition Apart from the risks inherent in a campaign in the Afghan highlands Russia would in the existing international situation be facing disaster should she concentrate a large proportion of her forces so far away from her western frontier, to say nothing of the danger from Japan It is practically certain that Japan would not allow Russia to establish herself in India, thereby threatening Japan's position in the Pacific It is equally unlikely that Germany would sit with folded hands while Russia increased her wealth and material resources by annexing the Indian sub-continent

The defence policy of India must be re-shaped to meet the new as well as the former dangers of older standing The first essential is to neutralize the North-West Frontier and so make possible a redistribution of troops with a view to opposing an invasion from the sea or possibly from the direction of south-east China should Japan seize Canton and the southern Chinese provinces The British government will doubtless insist on a clear and definite policy of pacification on the Frontier The question is discussed in a later chapter Pacification is

possible but it will take time and meanwhile a considerable body of regular troops will have to be maintained in Frontier stations, the fighting value of the Frontier formations should be enhanced by mechanization to the greatest possible extent To give mechanized troops their full opportunity Government should insist on making motorable roads throughout tribal territory The opening up of the country that would follow would help in the evolution of a system of tribal self-government, without which there can be no hope of a solution of the Frontier problem

An alternative proposal to pacification has been suggested by an advanced school of military thought The argument is that there is no hope of weaning the tribesman from his wild independence, therefore the best policy to adopt is to leave him to stew in his own juice in the hills, withdraw all ground troops from the Frontier, protect the settled districts with a barbed wire entanglement and police the Frontier with the Air Force If the barrier were pierced and offences committed in British territory the tribe concerned would after due warning be bombed till they made restitution Tactics of this kind would, it is contended, convince the tribesman that he must let British territory alone

The objections to withdrawal to the administrative border have been discussed elsewhere As regards indiscriminate bombing (after warning) it may be remarked that it is at best doubtful whether its value, material or moral, from the military point of view, compensates for the odium the British government has attracted to itself by its refusal to give up

bombing for police purposes in tribal areas, at the Geneva conference in 1933 convened to discuss the limitation of aerial bombing. Bombing in tribal areas can only be a real deterrent when directed against large villages, and these are infrequent on the border. Even in such cases the damage to the primitive buildings of which such villages consist is soon made good. The hate it inspires lives on and makes the prospect of a friendly understanding between the British authorities and the tribesmen more remote than ever. Yet even without bombing of non-military objectives the aeroplane is of very great value on the Frontier, e.g. for scouting, covering the advance of troops by dropping bombs on or machine-gunning enemy tribesmen, breaking up tribal concentrations by bombing and so on.

The defence of India is closely connected with the protection of British interests in the Pacific and Indian oceans; it cannot be considered in isolation. The great naval base at Singapore is a bulwark of India against Japanese aggression. An advanced school of military thought looks on the establishment of a great air base on the Southern Indian plateau as the best means of defending India, supporting Singapore and Aden and keeping open communications with Australia, New Zealand and Hong-Kong. It should be able to ward off or at least to hold up an attack from the sea till land forces could be brought to the threatened point. In a crisis it could reinforce the Frontier and for that reason it should be possible to reduce Frontier garrisons if the policy in question were adopted. The Indian army would be completely reorganized and mechanized to give it equal

fighting value to that of an invading force of a great military power

There is much to be said for making the Air Force mainly responsible for the future defence of India It offers the quickest means of meeting the danger which India has to face for the first time in a century and a half Indian opinion would doubtless favour an attempt to build up an Indian navy It is, however, impossible to improvise a navy, to say nothing of the expense involved which India could not possibly meet, aeroplanes can be produced much quicker than capital ships Conscription, which some politicians advocate, would not solve the difficulty, the military value of the various strata of the population is absurdly unequal, an officer class could not be improvised, an Indian conscript army would be even less able than the Chinese to stand up against a well-trained Japanese army A Madras conscript regiment on the Frontier would have a hilarious welcome from border tribesmen!

The success or otherwise of future military policy with regard to the defence of India must depend largely on the extent to which it is possible to enlist the support of Indian political opinion Defence is a reserved subject under the Indian reformed constitution, as it obviously must be so long as Britain remains responsible for the protection of India This reservation is repugnant to the Hindu politician whatever his complexion Moderate opinion demands that control of external affairs should be entrusted to Indians, the army Indianized and placed under an Indian War Minister, Britain is urged to show complete confidence in political India This

attitude is at least disingenuous in view of the fact that the strongest political party in India, the Hindu Congress, which now rules in seven out of the eleven provinces of India, proclaims its intention to sever the British connexion at the first opportunity. It proclaims further that in the event of Britain being involved in a world war it would refuse all assistance from India and would take advantage of British embarrassment to break away from the British Commonwealth Would not British confidence in such circumstances be misplaced? At the same time Congress view with dismay the present world situation that has developed from what it terms the unabashed defiance of the dictator powers of international obligations It denounces British foreign policy as largely responsible for the present crisis because of its non-resistance to Fascist aggression Apparently Congress thinks Britain should have gone to war with Italy and Japan, in order that the Indian politician might be freed from the incubus of the fear of foreign aggression, and so make it possible for them to dispense with British military aid They would not have lifted a finger to help Britain in the struggle, their prayer would have been that both Britain and her Fascist opponents might be so weakened as to cease to be an international danger What Congress really want is the complete control of the Indian government and the withdrawal of British troops They realize, however, that India could not possibly defend herself against outside aggression and they expect that Britain should pledge herself to protect India for a term of years Whether they would offer anything in return is doubtful,

they consider that Britain had a moral responsibility which she has repudiated of training India to defend herself, the Indian military budget, they contend, has been a veiled subsidy to Britain As remarked in an earlier chapter their view is that Britain has kept the tribes of the Afghan Frontier in a permanent state of irritation in order to justify the retention of an unnecessarily large British element, both in the rank and file and in the officer cadre Let Britain hand over control of the Frontier to Congress and they would soon induce the Pathan to join hands with them in building up a great Indian democracy !

The views on military policy just discussed are those of the Hindu politician The fate of India does not, however, lie in his hands What is the opinion of the seventy millions of Moslems is not clear The Moslem League opposes federation as laid down in the India Act because it gives the Hindus (including the States which are almost entirely Hindu) a considerable majority in the federal legislature, at the same time it is hardly likely that Moslems would support Congress in an attempt to embarrass Britain in the event of a world war They are at the moment bitterly anti-Hindu, despite the anti-British feeling engendered by the Reforms they might be ready to give their co-operation to a scheme devised to protect their country against invasion Their chief preoccupation at the moment is to keep level politically with the Hindus They will never submit to be ruled by a Hindu majority If Britain should be compelled to leave India they would put out all their strength in an effort to hold the north from Calcutta to the Durand line Most of them feel that should a crisis

develop they could rely on the support of the great Moslem bloc that extends from Kabul to the Red Sea

There is a third interested party, perhaps the strongest and most important of them all, the Indian Princes Nearly half India and a fourth of its population belong to the Indian States A third or more of the territories which Congress rules to-day was originally ceded to Britain as the price of British military protection It still carries that moral obligation The Princes have paid for protection and can claim it They are entitled to insist that the military situation shall not be prejudiced as a consequence of the separatist tendencies of Congress They maintain voluntarily large forces of regular troops available for Imperial service, many of them have served in the Empire's wars, they have had practical experience of military problems Apart from their treaty rights they are thus better qualified to advise on military affairs than the Indian politician It will be objected that constitutionally they cannot take part in any such discussion till federation is established That is so, but there is nothing to prevent the British government from consulting them

The defence of the country is one of the greatest of the outstanding political questions in India It is an all-Indian question and can only be satisfactorily settled if all the parties concerned have an opportunity of expressing their views The requisite action can only be effectively taken by a federal government In such a government it is possible that a majority might be found to support a sound policy in the matter The Princes in approaching the question of federation are actuated to a large extent by con-

siderations of self-preservation, and the maintenance of their rights and dignities They relegate to the background questions like the defence of India which in reality goes to the very roots of their position , if India were successfully invaded there can be little doubt that princely India would disappear Only with the Princes' support can the future military policy of India be placed on a sound basis Their influence would more than counterbalance Congress opposition , it would win to the side of moderation and common sense many politicians who do not subscribe to the Congress creed The Princes would not approach this great problem in a grudging spirit , they would not expect Britain to bear the full burden of the added cost of military preparation necessary to ensure the safety of India , they would agree that India should contribute to the limit of her resources Convince them that a mighty Air Force based on Southern India with a highly mechanized Army behind it is the best means of promptly meeting the danger that now threatens the peace of India and it would have their full support in the federal legislature Convince them that the pacification of the Frontier is an essential element in Imperial strategy and for that purpose too they would be prepared to support the legislature in supplying the necessary finance It is the fashion with Indian politicians of the advanced school of thought to assert the impossibility of the autocrats of the States combining with the newly fledged democracy of India The attitude is largely artificial , most Indians have a great respect for the Princes, especially for those who rule great dominions with justice and mercy What is more,

the argument rings hollow from a group like Congress, which is rapidly developing into a despotic oligarchy

It follows from what has been said that the defence of India is largely connected with the establishment of federation. One may hope that this fact will weigh with the Princes when they come finally to consider whether or not to complete the new political structure in India Another point of importance is that once the federal scheme starts to function it will undoubtedly have an influence on Indian politics generally, especially if the Princes are generous enough to meet the Indian politician to some extent, by liberalizing their system of rule, declaring the fundamental rights of citizenship for example, ensuring the impartiality of the judiciary, allowing some popular influence at least in the nomination of their representatives in the federal legislature A great responsibility lies on the Princes Will they prove themselves equal to it? What is wanted above all in India is an atmosphere of good will and confidence between Britain and at least a majority of the people of India The Princes can do much to bring about this desirable result

It is unnecessary to stress the urgency of a reorientation of British Imperial strategy in India and the Far East A settlement adequate to the purpose in view is possible only if India is prepared to play her part, there must be give and take Only a friendly partnership between India and Britain can achieve the desired results A great Air Force will undoubtedly be essential, the cost of this would be shared in agreed proportions by the two countries,

since the Force would be responsible for securing British communications not only with India but with the Far East and Australia and for supporting Singapore and Hong-Kong Many India politicians realize the necessity of mechanization, though they would consider very closely whether its introduction would not make possible the reduction of some of the units of the present Army The reorganization of the present Army may be worth consideration It has indeed been suggested in some quarters that there should be two separate armies in India, Imperial and Dominion, the former being under the control of Whitehall and comprising the British troops stationed in India, the Air Force and selected Indian and Gurkha units, the Dominion army might be placed under the control of an Indian War Minister, a policy which would help to enlist Indian support

Most political groups are prepared to admit that whatever view they may hold of the composition of the Army—an oft-repeated criticism is that a British soldier costs about four times as much as an Indian —it is essential that it should be brought up to date in point of mechanization as early as possible, especially as regards the Air Force The criticism that reconstruction has been too long delayed is unquestionably justified

The British government have at length made a tentative approach to the question They propose (September 1938), subject to the approval of Parliament, to increase the military subvention paid to India from one and a half to two millions sterling and to make India a grant of five millions sterling towards mechanization of the British and Indian

armies An expert committee presided over by Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield will proceed to India shortly to report as to how the limited resources of India can best be utilized, and to make recommendations It may be noted here that the Indian military budget is about thirty-eight millions sterling —29 per cent of the total provincial and central revenues of the country, not very much higher than that of Britain in normal times (at present it is 32 per cent) and very much less than that of Japan The British element is to be reduced by four battalions, which will effect a considerable saving Doubtless it is thought that this reduction in strength will be compensated by the increased fighting value of mechanized units and possibly by an increase in the Air Force As regards the strength of the British element it is as well to remember that twenty-seven British battalions (nearly half the total strength) are earmarked for internal security, mainly to keep the peace between Hindu and Moslem The savage outbursts of religious fanaticism in the last few years prove that this disposition of British troops is not made without sound reasons It might be possible to economize in the use of the British element by employing aircraft-carriers, thereby increasing the range and rapidity of movement of widely-diffused units

The problem of the Imperial Frontier will loom large in the political vistas before the Committee They will probably not find it possible to recommend any important reductions in military strength on the border until real progress is made with a policy of pacification They will certainly have to consider

to what extent the Frontier should be an Imperial responsibility

The Hindu Congress loses no opportunity of proclaiming its intention of eliminating British control and influence from India at the earliest moment Its main obstacle is the strong position of Britain from a military point of view Till recently Congress has not attempted a direct attack on that position, contenting itself with invidious propaganda and violent criticism in the Central Assembly During the present year it has adopted more dangerous tactics by starting anti-recruiting campaigns in the Panjab among the clans which provide the greater part of the strength of the Indian army The Panjab government (chiefly Moslem in composition) has made loyal endeavours to oppose their activities, the Prime Minister, Sir Sikandar Hayat, in particular, having toured the villages speaking in support of the Army Feeling that more determined action was necessary, the Panjab government suggested all-India legislation and a Bill has now been passed penalizing the activities in question It is significant that the passage of the Bill was made possible only by Moslem support, Mr Jinnah, leader of the Moslem League, remarking that what had convinced him of the necessity of the legislation was the speeches against it of the Congress members

As observed already the Princes are very closely interested in the military problem in India The Committee will doubtless endeavour unofficially to obtain their views on Indian military policy generally

It is a strange irony of fate that when India most needs British support and co-operation her most

prominent political leaders should strain every nerve to break away from the Empire, there are, however, signs that the phase is passing, and with the steadying influence of the Princes in the federation one may hope for a strong government at the Centre able and ready to fulfil its obligations to the Empire

Chapter VIII

WAZIRISTAN

THE problem of Frontier administration has been increasingly difficult since the War, in no part of the Frontier has it been more complicated than in Waziristan Absorbed as it naturally is in British and European politics the British Press does not give much prominence to events in India, people who take an interest in news from that country will have observed that Waziristan has in recent years been responsible for most of the sensations Indeed in pre-war days leading British newspapers would have had special correspondents at the front to report on military operations such as the recent campaign in Waziristan in which the Indian government put nearly 40,000 men in the field The result of this lack of interest is that few people in Britain realize the inherent danger in the unstable conditions prevalent on our one great Imperial frontier

A brief sketch if Waziristan has been given in an earlier chapter Two great tribes, the Mahsuds and the Darwesh Kheyl Wazirs, divide between them this small mountainous country, about one-third the size of Switzerland The Mahsuds hold the greater part of the southern bloc of mountains from the Tochi valley to the Gumal, on the west

they are shut in by the Ahmadzai (Darwesh Kheyl Wazirs) who own the Wana plateau , on the east by the Bhittannis, whose country lies between them and the Dera Ismail Khan district There is a Sulaiman Kheyl Ghilzai settlement south of the Gumal river , in the south of Wana is a strong settlement of Dotannis, a tribe allied to the Ghilzais, the great nomad tribe of Afghanistan These people with some of their nomad kinsmen have of late years shown in an emphatic form their dislike of the British, to whom they owe loyalty, in return for British complaisance in allowing them to live on the British side of the Durand line

There has, of course, never been a census of these British protected subjects Officially the able-bodied strength of the tribes is given roughly at about 20,000 for the Mahsuds and 30,000 for the Wazirs, which would possibly mean a total population of about 300,000 with the Dawars in the Tochi valley

The country is intersected by a series of valleys, the Kurram with its tributary the Kaitu and the Tochi in the northern tract , the Khaisorah, Shaktu, the Tank Zam, the Shuza and the Gumal on the south The Kurram and Tochi valleys are comparatively open country compared with the mountain mass to the south The head of the Tochi valley, up to the Afghan border, (the Khost province) is mountainous, the homeland of the big Madda Kheyl tribe Roads connect Thal in Kohat with the Tochi for which the tribes concerned receive allowances ; the Madda Kheyl are paid for keeping the caravan track through their country open, the track that leads to Ghazni As noted elsewhere the Mahsuds

are subsidized for allowing the use of the Gumal, so are the Sulaiman Kheyl, the Dotannis and the Wana Wazirs

The earlier associations of the British with Waziristan have been referred to already For nearly half a century their outposts have been intruded into tribal territory, at Wana, Sarwakai and at points in the Gumal, and in the Tochi valley At first held by regular troops they were, after the Mahsud blockade of 1901–2, garrisoned by irregular militias recruited mainly from the tribes, trained and commanded by British officers Most of the Wazir tribes are nomad, in the course of their annual migrations they have to cross routes easily accessible to British armed forces, a fact which has influenced their behaviour, and generally speaking the Darwesh Kheyl had been, since the British occupation of Waziristan, less hostile and truculent than the Mahsuds Another reason for their comparative innocuousness was that several of the clans, the Tori Kheyl, Ahmadzai, for example, were at enmity with the Mahsuds, mainly in consequence of grazing disputes, and were glad of British moral support Generally speaking, too, these nomad Wazirs are better off than the Mahsuds They are less cramped for space, their grazing grounds are more extensive, the produce of their flocks and herds is more or less sufficient for their support The feuds between Mahsud and Wazir had prevented the cooperation of Mahsud and Wazir against Government until the disturbances following the Afghan War of 1919, which have led to a change in their attitude

The Mahsuds at times did things on the grand scale In 1863, for example, they made a mass attack

on the frontier town of Tank in the Dera Ismail Khan district, but were driven back by a detachment of Indian cavalry, in 1880 they actually burnt the town as a demonstration in favour of the Amir, with the natural consequence of an invasion of their country Another invasion in force was carried out in 1895 after the attack on the Wana column At this time a fanatical mullah, known as the mullah Powindah, acquired a powerful influence over the Mahsuds which until his death in 1914 was continually exerted against the British government He was mainly responsible for the attack on the Wana column In the early 'nineties a new scheme for controlling the Mahsuds was given a trial, based on a system known as the Sandeman system in Baluchistan after its originator, which had been a success on that part of the border The Baluchistan tribes were organized on a more or less oligarchic basis, and by giving moral and material support to the *maliks* or *tumandars* (tribal leaders) the British authorities had found it possible to maintain peaceful relations with tribal territory The position was radically different in Waziristan and the experiment proved a failure For one thing the Mahsud scheme of life was intensely democratic Their country was more difficult of access, British forces were not interposed between them and the Afghan frontier as in Baluchistan, the Mahsuds had a safe retreat into the territory of the Amir and looked to Afghanistan for moral and material support The Baluch tribes were less interested in Kabul There were few Mahsud *maliks* of any position The money paid to British nominees did not carry them very far, more-

over, the influence of the mullah Powindah was strongly exerted against the subsidized *maliks* They never really had a chance of making good in the chaotic conditions prevailing in their country Probably most of them never intended to facilitate British control What they wanted was the Feringhee's money At all events it was useless to expect them to control the younger members of the tribe without backing them up with a strong tribal police Something of this kind might possibly have been successful at that time when the tribe was for the greater part armed with obsolete weapons

There was nothing for it, or at least so the British authorities thought, but to revert to the old system of distributing tribal allowances among the body of the tribesmen, which meant tumultuous assemblages of several thousand tribesmen at Tank twice a year or so, for each tribesman to receive perhaps a couple of shillings representing his share of the tribal subsidy, with perhaps two or three times as much entertainment allowance during the stay of the *jirgah* in Tank, usually prolonged to make possible the settlement of claims for damages brought by British subjects

The change of policy did not improve the position and the Mahsud cup of iniquity was full when Lord Curzon became Viceroy in 1899 Anxious to avoid the cost of an expedition, and doubtful of the efficacy of such a measure, he decided on a blockade supported by strong forces It was kept up for nearly two years , finally as mentioned in another chapter the Mahsuds having shown no signs of coming to terms the country was invaded in a series of short rushes with the result that the tribe sued for peace,

paid a fine in rifles and cash and settled down to a period of comparative tranquillity during which they earned considerable sums in road contracts From time to time there were fresh outbreaks involving military demonstrations, several British officers serving in Waziristan, including two Political Agents, were murdered, almost invariably the hand of the mullah Powindah could be traced in these outrages

For reasons already given the Darwesh Kheyl have not rivalled the Mahsuds in truculence It is true that the widespread disturbances of 1897 were started by the Madda Kheyl in upper Tochi as a result of their unprovoked attack on a small British force at Maizar The trouble did not, however, spread among the Wazirs and the Mahsuds kept out, a fact which greatly relieved the situation Depredations by outlaws harboured by Wazirs in the lower Kurram valley led to clearing-up operations in 1902 From that time onwards till Amir Amanullah's *jihad* in 1919 the Wazirs gave no serious trouble They did not join the *jihad* from Khost in 1915

The British authorities had hoped that a policy of strict non-interference in Wazir and Mahsud affairs beyond the grant of subsidies, intended to aid the *maliks* in keeping the young bloods in order, together with the enlistment of tribesmen in the local militias, would help to maintain a peaceful border These hopes have, it will be seen, proved fallacious Since 1852 repeated outrages by Mahsuds and Wazirs have necessitated seventeen military expeditions mainly against the Mahsuds The latter tribe was restless throughout the War, and finally its aggressiveness in 1917 made reprisals inevitable An expedition fol-

lowed and as noted elsewhere peace was patched up as soon as possible

The Afghan *jihad* of 1919 led to a tumultuous rising of the Wazir tribes and Mahsuds at the call of Islam The Wazirs in the militias mutinied and in most cases got away with their rifles and large supplies of ammunition both at Wana and in the Tochi A series of raids and kidnappings in British territory followed After the signature of a preliminary peace with Afghanistan in August 1919 the British government, which desired to avoid a series of campaigns, offered very lenient terms to both tribes, they were absolutely refused War followed in due course and after the heaviest fighting ever known on the Frontier, Government forces were, by May 1920, in occupation of Ladha in the heart of Mahsud country, within easy reach of the principal tribal centres of Kaniguram and Makin It was not found possible to enforce tribal responsibility, only a few of the Mahsuds submitted and accepted the Government terms It would probably have been better policy to refuse to make a piecemeal settlement Later Wana, which had been abandoned in the war of 1919, was re-occupied The Wana Wazirs withdrew into the hills and it was not possible to exact retribution for their uncompromising hostility

The intractability of the Frontier problem is strikingly illustrated by the events of the next few years With large British forces in occupation of strategic points in Waziristan trouble was almost continuous in 1921 The recalcitrants among the Mahsuds and Wazirs were supported both with arms and money by anti-British elements in other parts of

the border, for example by Haji Abdur Razaq and Mullah Bashir of the Chamarkand colony of Hindustani Fanatics Another disturbing factor was the unshakeable conviction, which had animated the tribes throughout, that Kabul would issue a fresh call to arms of the Faithful The delay in signing the peace treaty encouraged the delusion The activities of the Khilafat party in India, and the *hijrat* or flight of Moslem pilgrims to Afghanistan from the impure land of the infidel, had their repercussions on the border Even when the treaty was signed in November 1921 the tribes refused to believe that it was anything more than a temporary truce In June 1921 the arrival of two 6-inch howitzers in Ladha improved matters A steady bombardment of the vicinity continued up to the middle of September This was too much for Mahsud nerves, cultivation and harvesting were discouraged by the feeling that men working in the fields might suddenly be blown sky-high By the end of the year, the Abdullai, one of the worst sections of the Mahsuds, had come to terms Later the Wana Wazirs signed a treaty, troops were withdrawn and Khassadars (tribal police) substituted This withdrawal created a false impression that Government was not in earnest Ultimately the country had to be reoccupied by regulars Kidnappings and raids continued in the Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan districts, military convoys and pickets were attacked and in some cases cut up, finally as a result of intensive bombing of proscribed areas, the hostile sections accepted the terms offered them

The British government now decided on a change of

Mahsud jugah at Kanguram

Holmes

policy Non-interference combined with blackmail had hopelessly failed, a system promising better results was essential The new methods described as peaceful penetration constitute, it is believed, the official policy to-day To secure a degree of military control the Razmak plateau, 6,000 feet high, commanding much of Tori Kheyl and Mahsud country, was occupied by a strong brigade New forces of irregulars were raised, the Tochi Scouts and South Waziristan Scouts, strong posts garrisoned by these irregular troops were located at strategic points, motor roads were driven through Mahsud country linking Razmak through Jandola with Dera Ismail Khan, and with Bannu through the Tochi Strong bodies of Khassadars were enlisted to protect the roads and generally to assist in maintaining communications No effort seems to have been made to restore tribal responsibility, without which trouble was inevitable

For a time it appeared that the new policy offered prospects of success It is true that unrest on the Khost border at times reacted on the British side of the Durand line, especially during the Mangal rebellion against the Amir in 1923 The Afghan authorities had enrolled a Khost militia in which the mutineers of 1919 of the Waziristan irregular corps formed the nucleus with their British rifles, British subjects were invited to join the new force There can indeed be no doubt that Afghan intrigues during the Great War, followed by the *jihad* of 1919, had turned the political aspirations of the tribes more strongly than ever towards Kabul The political disturbances of 1929 in Afghanistan emphasized the

tendency Amanullah was driven from his throne by a series of insurrections brought on by his precipitate methods of westernizing the country Soon after the flight of the ex-monarch, Nadir Khan, a member of the royal house of Kabul (the Durani family), appeared in Khost with the object of raising a force to expel the usurper, Bacha Saqqao Wazirs and Mahsuds flocked in thousands from the British side of the Durand line to his standard They were well armed , many of them had had a military training , they were fine fighting material Very largely as a result of their assistance Nadir Khan succeeded in recovering the throne of Kabul The contingents from Waziristan returned to their hills stuffed with the loot of Kabul, and inspired with the conviction that king-making was a profitable enterprise to be undertaken whenever an opportunity offered A year or two later an incipient insurrection in Birmal (a district of Khost adjoining Madda Kheyl country) raised hopes of another onslaught on Kabul , it was with the greatest difficulty that the political authorities prevented a Madda Kheyl *lashkar* from crossing the line

It was almost inevitable that the success of Wazir intervention in restoring the Kabul throne to a member of the rightful dynasty should attract other pretenders with similar claims. And so it came about that two or three years after Nadir Khan's victories, a bastard son of an ex-Amir (Yaqub Khan) who had died a British pensioner, appeared in Khost and unfurled the standard of revolt The British authorities for some unexplained reason were taken by surprise , large *lashkars* of Wazirs and Mahsuds were

allowed to cross the line and join the pretender They defeated the Afghan troops sent against them and laid siege to Matun, capital of the Khost province This meant a heavy blow to Afghan prestige, and increased the danger of the spreading of the movement to other provinces The Orakzais were preparing to move across the line, and if this had happened probably half Afghanistan would have risen against King Nadir Shah The Afghan authorities sent strong protests against this breach of neutrality Action was immediately taken, but it was only after the strongest pressure, political and military, had been applied that the British authorities succeeded in inducing the *lashkars* to return The effect on Anglo-Afghan relations, which had been better than ever before, can be easily imagined A recent incident of the kind in which, however, effective action was taken in time to prevent disaster, will be referred to later on

These happenings show how little account the Wazirs and Mahsuds take of their responsibilities as British protected subjects Their readiness to interfere in Afghan affairs adds another anxiety to the cares of the British political officer

By 1927 the British authorities were hopefully expressing the view that the Mahsuds were becoming less averse to official intervention in their tribal disputes The tribe had greatly benefited by road contracts, by payments for land required for roads and by Khassadar service , the Tori Kheyl especially who owned the Razmak plateau had accumulated what was wealth to border tribesmen Mahsuds were running a motor-lorry service along the new

roads with contracts for furnishing British posts with supplies Schools had been opened in several places and a system of scholarships introduced to make it possible for Mahsud boys to receive secondary education Provision had been made for medical relief All this was being appreciated by the tribe and it seemed that at long last an era of peace was approaching

These hopes were short-lived By 1930 political officers felt presages of a coming storm There had been a bad harvest and economic stress was showing itself in some parts of Mahsud country The road network had been completed , contracts were falling off , there was a growing pressure on the land The generation that had reached adult age since the war of 1920 was spoiling for a fight

About this time the influence of Indian politics began to be felt across the administrative border Khan Abdul Ghaffar, thanks to the *laissez-faire* policy of Simla, was in 1930 recruiting his army of Red Shirts and spreading sedition from one end of the Frontier to the other In June 1930 Afridi *lashkars* thousands strong were swarming round the barbed-wire perimeter of Peshawar Later came the Delhi Pact, the Gandhi-Irwin agreement which, whatever it did for the rest of India, had a deplorable effect on the Frontier One might have seen Red Shirt Pathans shouting obscene abuse at Sikh soldiers, their hereditary enemies, and jeering at loyal, harassed, Frontier Constabulary Government officers and soldiers honoured the Pact, the political armistice, while Gandhi went to London , Red Shirts and Congress men on the Frontier did not Congress

agents went everywhere In Mahsud country they found a ready welcome, in some cases the homesteads of tribesmen who denounced them were burnt by anti-British elements, an object lesson which shows that public opinion has a way of expressing itself in tribal territory Congress emissaries even penetrated to Khost The Madda Kheyl were so stimulated by the political agitator that they and the Khiddar Kheyl laid siege to the British post of Datta Kheyl at the head of the Tochi valley Under Congress stimulus the western Orakzais attacked the Kurram valley, there was a clash between a large body of Hathi Kheyl Wazir demonstrators and British troops on the Bannu-Kohat road in which a British officer was killed and heavy casualties incurred on both sides No wonder Afghan officials and tribesmen generally thought the British had renounced power in favour of the Congress It is surprising that the whole border did not burst into flame

The position improved after the arrest of Abdul Ghaffar and several hundred Red Shirt leaders at the end of 1931 Anti-British agitation was revived shortly afterwards as a result of the Shahid Ganj mosque affair at Lahore and the anti-Hindu riot of the Moslems of Karachi. Conditions remained unsettled on the Waziristan border, finally resulting in the tribal outbreak of 1936.

There had been trouble with the Tori Kheyl (Utmanzai Wazirs), and as a result of pressure from the political authorities the malik had agreed in 1935 to the construction of a road up the Khaisorah valley, which contains the principal settlements of the tribe. In addition the malik had agreed to give

no harbourage to outlaws or other persons hostile to Government The agreement had not been put into effect when the Hindu-Moslem clash over a minor Hindu girl who had been kidnapped by a Moslem, led to disturbances in the Tochi valley The kidnapper claimed that the girl had embraced Islam, that he had married her and that she was his lawful wife This was denied by her parents, who instituted civil proceedings for her restoration to their guardianship The Moslem was supported by his community, and the extent to which respect for British authority had waned on the border was shown by an attempt made to force the hand of the District Magistrate by a huge Moslem demonstration When that failed help was sought across the border The response was immediate, a large *lashkar* of Dawars led by a local mullah, the Faqir of Ipi, assembled in a threatening manner on the border hills, a few miles from Bannu The Dawars, it should be noted, live under British administration in the Tochi and the assembly of a *lashkar* was an act of insurgence, all the more remarkable because the Dawars are not distinguished by warlike qualities and are moreover dominated by British garrisons Their behaviour is another proof of the unsettling effect of political agitation from India on tribal psychology

Pressure was soon applied by the political authorities and the *lashkar* was induced to disperse Unfortunately it had not been possible to effect the arrest of the Faqir, who moved from the administered area of the Tochi into the Lower Khaisorah, from which safe harbourage he started violent propaganda against the Government It was now thought desirable to

induce the Tori Kheyl to carry out their agreement in regard to the road and at the same time to persuade them to control the Faqir The *maliks* were prepared to comply, but alleged that the younger members of the tribe were inclined to make difficulties, and the *maliks* felt they could only control the situation, if the British made a military demonstration in force in the valley Government agreed to give the *maliks* the moral support they asked for and on 25th November 1936 two brigades moved into the valley from opposite directions with the object of meeting at Biche Kashkai, half-way down the valley. It is not clear whether a *badragga* or safe-conduct party of *maliks* accompanied the column or not. At all events the troops met with opposition at the outset and although ultimately the objective was reached they suffered heavy casualties, nineteen being killed, including two British officers, and 102 wounded. This behaviour involved punitive operations, which took the shape of an advance in force into the Khaisorah, the troops to remain in occupation till a fine in cash and rifles had been paid and the road to Damdil at the head of the valley constructed. A military post was to be constructed at Biche Kashkai.

The advance began in December. Meanwhile the proceedings in the British law courts had ended in the return of the Hindu girl to her parents, a decision which was inevitable at the outset. The law could not be strained to suit political expediency at the dictates of a tribal mullah.

The punitive operations were over by the beginning of 1937; a settlement was made and the troops evacuated the valley. What really mattered—the

capture or muzzling of the Faqir of Ipi—was not effected, he had moved to a difficult position where he took up his quarters in caves at Arsalkot on the Mahsud boundary overlooking the Shaktu, beyond the reach of the British forces It soon became clear that the Tori Kheyl *maliks* had no sort of control over the *Kashars* or junior members of the tribe and that they could not carry out their pledges to expel or keep the Faqir in hand Anti-British agitation had penetrated far and wide into tribal areas, with the Faqir at large there was no hope of avoiding further military operations The less responsible elements among the Tori Kheyl and surrounding tribes had little to lose, prolonged peace was irksome to them, exaggerated rumours were current of great hauls of rifles and ammunition from unseasoned down-country Hindu troops, Islam was in danger It is hardly surprising that the young bloods were stimulated by the early retirement of the troops to try conclusions with Government, junior members of the Tori Kheyl had a new grievance in that they considered the additional allowances had been unevenly distributed

It was not long before practically the whole of the Tori Kheyl were again up in arms; hostile *lashkars* including contingents from most of the tribes assumed a threatening attitude both in the Khaisorah and the Shaktu On February 6th Captain Keogh, a Scouts' officer, was murdered by Mahsuds, about the same time an assistant political officer, Lieutenant Beatty, was murdered at the western end of the Tochi by the Madda Kheyl A series of outrages followed, consisting of raids in the administered and

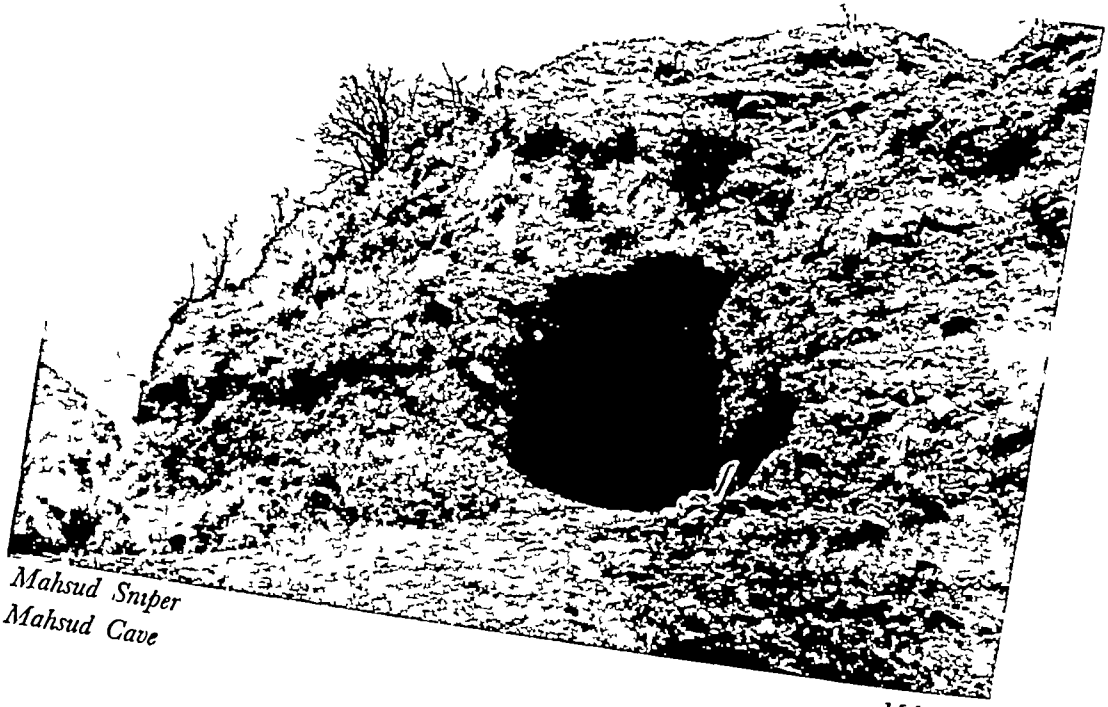
The Shahur tangi *or defile* *Holmes*

stan would be involved by the adherence of irresponsible groups of their younger members to the hostile *lashkars* in the Khaisorah This is what actually happened

No warning appears to have been issued to the tribes that tribal responsibility would be strictly enforced, the authorities evidently feeling that to do so would simply have meant a series of campaigns against each tribe To meet the risks involved in the uncertain attitude of the tribes generally the military authorities decided to employ overwhelming strength and between 30,000 and 40,000 men were mobilized in the Waziristan area There was some heavy fighting, a military achievement that stands out above everything else was a brilliant night march leading to the occupation of the Sham plain at the head of the Shaktu Shortly after the Faqir's headquarters at Arsalkot were attacked and the Faqir fled to Bhittanni country By the 3rd June Tori Kheyl resistance had collapsed, the tribe asked for terms, and an armistice was granted on condition that the tribe took responsibility for the hostiles in its territory and that it agreed not to re-admit the Faqir and would release all kidnapped Hindus The Mahsuds, oddly enough, were not considered to be officially at war with Government, attempts were made by British political officers to settle with sections of that tribe that had joined the Tori Kheyl in their opposition to Government troops Casualties at this stage had reached several hundreds, including 163 killed

Arsalkot is a small hamlet consisting of about a dozen houses and one Wazir tower It stands above

Mela Ram



Mahsud Sniper
Mahsud Cave

Mela Ram

the Shaktu valley on a forty-foot cliff on the border-line between Mahsud and Tori Kheyl country The Faqir and his entourage occupied three large caves cut out of the cliff side, capable of accommodating about 150 men It was determined that he should not again use his old headquarters, the caves were blown to pieces

To facilitate the rapid movement of troops the British authorities decided to open up the Shaktu by means of roads In June some 1,200 tribesmen were engaged on lucrative terms in assisting to carry out the scheme and incidentally were earning money to pay Government fines

The Faqir was still active in organizing hostilities in every possible form It was advisable to get him away from the Dera Ismail Khan border and accordingly the area in which he had installed himself on the edge of Bhittanni country was proscribed and bombed from the air This led to his withdrawal to Shawal between Razmak and the Durand line

The British authorities now began to feel the difficulty of dealing piecemeal with recalcitrant subsections of the Mahsuds They had been able to patch up terms with the Tori Kheyl more or less as a unit, the position was different with the Mahsuds, the majority of whom had not actually taken part in the hostilities, at all events not directly Some subsections made their peace, others stood out and there was a good deal of trouble with mullah Sher Ali, a lieutenant of the Faqir Bombing operations in the Badar valley beyond Ladha had some effect, by the end of August it was possible to announce terms of peace to those involved

The penalties demanded can hardly be described as severe A fine of £5,250 and 1,000 rifles was imposed, a proportion of the rifles to be of foreign make, the remainder local, probably mostly the cheap Kohat Pass-made weapon It would be interesting to know the proportion fixed About this time the Kohat Pass factories were working night and day, doubtless in order to meet the demands of the Mahsud market In addition to the fine Government announced their intention of treating certain areas, viz an area south of Razmak not including Kaniguram, as a British protected area The terms were accepted by the Mahsuds

Another tribe, the Bhittannis, had heavily committed themselves both in the fighting and by a series of raids and kidnappings in Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu This tribe, with an estimated fighting strength of 6,000 men, has close associations with British territory, they have a perennial feud with the Mahsuds and have generally been regarded as susceptible to British influences The tribe was deeply infected with Red Shirt propaganda and at one time actually sent picquets to Tank There can be little doubt that political agitation inspired by the Indian Congress was largely responsible for the hostility of this tribe A brigade of troops was marched into Bhittanni country, after air action had induced the tribe to hand back the kidnapped Hindus There was very little opposition except on one occasion when about 300 tribesmen, including Mahsuds and Tori Kheyl, put up some sort of a fight Peace terms were accepted and complied with These included a rifle fine, the construction of a

road into the heart of the country and the declaration that certain areas would for the future be "protected" as in Mahsud and Wazir country

Despite the so-called peace, unsatisfactory conditions persisted in Mahsud country Sher Ali very soon had a *lashkar* of 300 men under his orders, and with it he attacked Khassadar posts with the object of breaking down the tribal settlement with Government It was necessary to occupy Ladha with troops and to take air action against the mullah and his men A brigade was located near Kanigoram Again the offending sections made their peace Warnings—to quote the official report—were given to the tribal *maliks* as to their future behaviour

It was not long before fresh trouble started in a different quarter The presence of the Faqir of Ipi near the Anglo-Afghan border in Madda Kheyl country led to unrest among the Madda Kheyl, Khassadar posts were attacked, the road was blocked at Spinwam between Thal and Idak in the Kurram valley A brigade was sent to the affected area which engaged 150 tribesmen, both Tori Kheyl and Madda Kheyl, inflicting casualties It is not noted whether either tribe was penalized for these hostilities Their behaviour is a striking commentary on the value of the peace A little earlier it had been necessary to undertake operations in the Mamirogha area north-west of Razani

Mullah Sher Ali again caused trouble in October with a small tribal force of 150 men As a result of air action the gathering dispersed.

Large bodies of troops were moved down the Khaisorah and early in November the 1st Brigade

proceeded into the Shaktu to overawe local hostile gangs There was some opposition from gangs of bad characters under notorious leaders

By the end of November road construction work was completed Two new scout posts at Biche Kashkai in the Khaisorah, the other at Ghariom at the head of the Sham valley were established

The general situation at this time seemed well in hand, no doubt to a great extent because of the tribal migrations, to which a state of war would practically put a stop By the 15th December most of the additional troops, with the exception of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, had been withdrawn to their peace stations The tribes as a whole had officially made peace, the fines had been deducted from tribal allowances, the rifle fines, the heaviest imposed for many years, had been paid The Faqir of Ipi, with his lieutenants, mullah Sher Ali, Din Faqir (Bhitanni) were still at large but, according to the official version, with their prestige very much on the wane

The campaign then was officially over by the middle of December 1937 As already observed nearly 40,000 troops had been engaged on the British side, one and a half millions sterling had been spent, involving a heavy strain on Indian finances, casualties in killed and wounded had not been far short of 1,000 men What had been the result? The arch-enemy was still at large, still plotting mischief It might, however, be hoped, not unreasonably, that the tribal losses in men and material, the dislocation of tribal life caused by the presence of large bodies of troops in tribal country, would exert a strong

influence in favour of peace The British government had shown that, whatever the political agitator might say, British military strength was unimpaired and that they were ready to use it

Never had border warfare been waged in more unsatisfactory conditions Practically all the leading tribes of Waziristan had been involved, but only in the case of the Tori Kheyl and Bhittannis were the Government troops dealing with the tribes as a whole Throughout the operations the fighting was of the guerrilla type and it does not appear that opposing *lashkars* ever exceeded 700 or 800 tribesmen Hostile gangs could move rapidly from one end of the country to the other, the result was to make it difficult for the British to maintain communications, and at one time nearly 10,000 troops were employed on keeping the roads open Even so the brigade at Wana had to be provisioned from the air or by lorries run by Mahsud "friendlies," who naturally made a big profit The fighting qualities and armament of the tribesmen made it dangerous to employ comparatively small detachments, animal transport hampered movement, for example, moving more or less in single file the brigade that carried out the night march on to the Sham plateau over difficult mountain tracks was spread out over four miles of hillside

The description by a special correspondent of a well-known English newspaper, the *Times of India*, published in Bombay, of an action in which a British column was engaged with a hostile *lashkar* is worth quoting in illustration of the difficulties British troops have to face in tribal warfare The events described occurred in June of this year (1938)

For several hours I watched the advance of the Razmak Brigade down from the Razmak-Narai (pass) to Razani, a distance of under five miles Picquets were thrown out on either side of the valley head and with their establishment the brigade was on the march Suddenly scrappy rifle fire broke out from the scrub-covered hillsides, two or three thousand yards on the left flank The riposte was tremendous Machine-guns rattled from the picquets and from behind , a battery unlimbered on a hairpin bend of the twisting, steeply descending road and went into action , an aeroplane zoomed overhead, spotting for the guns and doing some firing on its own account No one knew whether the spasmodic—at that distance practically futile—hostile fire came from five, fifty or five hundred tribesmen, but the few shots certainly did not suggest very many hostiles Yet the vulnerable column had to slow up almost to a halt to thunder at this gnat-like evidence of enmity—and it is doubtful if anything happened to anybody

The correspondent goes on to describe a movement of the combined Razmak and 3rd Infantry Brigades as they turned from the road at Razani to deal with a *lashkar* of Ipi adherents near the Lowargi pass above Mamirogha This *lashkar* had driven off the Khassadars and destroyed their posts The Datta Kheyl Scout fort was being attacked nightly A thick dust haze enveloped the hillside as the troops advanced along precipitous defiles and made air co-operation ineffective There was unexpected delay and the troops had to camp for the night at Mamirogha The tribesmen cut the water-supply and had to be driven off

Probably the most adverse factor in the operations was the breakdown of the system of tribal responsibility With most sections of the Mahsuds and their *maliks* posing as friendlies it was almost impossible to

exert pressure on the tribe as a whole, in order to induce the majority to suppress the hostiles who were compromising the tribal position At the same time there is little doubt that the friendly sections did not in many cases observe a strict neutrality, it is notorious that assistance in arms, men and supplies, and shelter are frequently given to hostile groups by officially neutral sections To suppress the tendency is not easy in mountainous country with defective communications Having regard to results it is perhaps not unreasonable to suggest that a more lasting settlement might have been effected had the British government declared at the outset that they would not deal with the Mahsuds except as a whole, that they were at war with the tribe and not with separate groups of tribesmen, and that people who did not wish to be involved must surrender with their arms and be detained in concentration camps till peace was finally concluded Otherwise every Mahsud of military age would be treated as an enemy, since every tribesman is a member of the tribal *lashkar* That is the logic of the situation Sternly applied it might have induced a majority of the Mahsuds to combine and hand over the Faqir As things were, it was nobody's business to endeavour to coerce disturbers of the peace

One is tempted to enquire why, if there is a degree of co-operation among tribesmen sufficient to enable them to collect 1,000 rifles as a fine, they could not combine to attack hostile groups and capture the Faqir Rifles would not be handed over without compensation sufficient to procure others in their place, the money required would have to be col-

lected from among members of the section or clan concerned, which seems to suggest some form of tribal organization, even if of a temporary nature

Widely held opinion in military circles ascribes the ineffectiveness of military operations against the tribesmen to the methods and policies of the Frontier political It is admitted that political control in a campaign lies with the General Officer commanding the troops and that political officers in charge of the tribes are under his orders. At the same time it is argued that the G O C would be taking a heavy responsibility if he discarded the advice of his political experts, he might lose prestige by being overruled from Simla or Whitehall, especially if the Governor of the province, to whom political officers are subordinate, supported them in the advice offered Political officers, many soldiers think, place their ægis too readily over friendly *maliks*, who are thereby encouraged covertly to assist hostile groups

The question of the clash of opinion between military and political officer on the Frontier has excited comment in the British-owned Press in India The view is expressed that on occasions it would seem that Generals conducting a campaign in tribal territory have been hampered in their task by action taken over their heads by high political authorities at home or in India The real trouble is the absence of a strong and clear-cut policy supported by Simla and Whitehall In its absence the political officer naturally feels that his duty is to keep, as far as possible, within the indeterminate boundaries of the policy of " peaceful penetration "

After a brief period of tranquillity during the winter

months it became apparent in the early spring that the war spirit was still rampant in Waziristan The Faqir of Ipi was finding a gratifying response to his intrigues and exhortations The Madda Kheyl *jirgah*, though " warned " to expel him, had failed to comply Sniping, kidnapping, the mining of roads and railway tracks with bombs, attacks on Khassadars, were going on everywhere, in spite of warnings and air action against hostile villages A new form of outrage was the contamination of water-supply systems Mullah Sher Ali visited the Faqir and later moved to South Waziristan with a force of 150 Mahsuds, and threatened Scout and Militia posts at Splitoi and Kotkai Captain Dewar, a Scouts officer, led out several platoons of Scouts to engage him The detachment was surrounded about dusk by the mullah's *lashkar*, Captain Dewar was killed and there is no doubt that the detachment of 100 men, which had practically exhausted its ammunition, would have been cut up but for the gallantry of an Air Force officer, Flight-Lieutenant Jackson, who, flying low, dropped packages of cartridges and Verey lights within reach of the Scouts. The outrage led to proscription and bombing of areas in Main Toi, Splitoi and Upper Badar villages after the usual warnings Later in May a *lashkar* besieged Datta Kheyl fort in the Tochi The siege lasted from May 10th till June 9th Two night attacks were made under cover of heavy rifle fire at close range A tribal gun was used, firing both solid and explosive shells The Scouts under a British officer, Lieutenant Lerwin, put up a splendid fight, constantly harassing the enemy with sorties

At the end of June the Madda Kheyl *jirgah* came in and declaring that the Faqir was no longer with them gave in a number of rifles as security for good behaviour

The Faqir was now in caves in the mountainous country west of Razmak near the Afghan border An attempt was made to assail his retreat by two brigades which moved out from Razani A *lashkar* which opposed their advance was dispersed, but owing to the difficulties of the terrain it was not found possible to reach the caves A new Scouts post was constructed at Lowargai to replace the Khassadar post destroyed by the *lashkar* Meanwhile the Datta Kheyl fort was again battered by tribal artillery

In South Waziristan the ubiquitous and irrepressible Sher Ali staged a new attack on the Splitoi Scouts picquet in which he again used a tribal gun His *lashkar* was later engaged by Scouts and regular troops and was reported to have dispersed

On 23rd July perhaps one of the most daring exploits of the war was carried out, when the town of Bannu was attacked at night by a *lashkar* 200 strong, consisting mostly of transborder tribesmen, though some of the Bannu Moslems were included Seven citizens were killed and fourteen wounded, several shops were burnt, the damage was estimated at £30,000 The marauders were finally driven off with a loss of several killed and twenty captured The attack was directed mainly against Hindu residents of the town, apparently as an outcome of communal feeling connected with the case of the Hindu girl of eighteen months earlier The trouble led to an exodus of Hindus across the Indus into the

Panjab, about a third of the people left the town Shortly before a *lashkar* of 300 Wazirs and Mahsuds had taken up a position in the hills north of Bannu, insolently threatening several villages on the Bannu and Kohat borders Whether it was this *lashkar* that attacked Bannu is not clear Whoever was responsible has succeeded in striking a heavy blow at British prestige Up to the time of writing (end of September 1938) there has been no further incident of outstanding importance on the Waziri border Military operations, however, continue and two brigades from Wana and Razmak are reported to have, on September 13th, engaged Sher Ali, once again inflicting a salutary lesson on his *lashkar*

A sketch of Air Force action and its value in frontier warfare may be of interest at this stage, especially in view of the recent discussions in the Press, both Indian and British, on bombing on the Indian borderland. One thing is clear; the aeroplane has not solved the Frontier problem as was thought possible when it was first brought into use in the border hills None the less it has been of the greatest value during the recent disturbances. It can, however, rarely be used decisively. Take, for example, the failure of air action against the Tori Kheyl in the spring of 1937 before the invasion of the Khaisorah. Later, the aeroplane was used chiefly against tribal forces, closely and actively engaged with ground troops, against hostile fortified villages and in proscribed areas. A curious regulation does not permit the bombing or machine-gunning of a tribal gathering unless it actually fires on the aircraft or on Government troops. The use of the 'plane in scouting and

in supporting or covering attacks has proved its worth on many occasions Whatever opinion one may hold of the moral value or political expediency of bombing proscribed areas or fortified villages, there can be no doubt that at times such operations have had a deterrent effect Action of the kind, for example, induced the Madda Kheyl to bring in the murderers of Lieutenant Beattie, it has certainly helped to curb the activities of mullah Sher Ali and the Mahsuds of the Upper Baddar On more than one occasion it has compelled the Faqir of Ipi to change his headquarters The procedure adopted aims at making sure that everyone in the proscribed area, which sometimes consists of a group of villages, should be aware that bombing is contemplated and should have an opportunity of clearing out with his family and belongings After the lapse of the period of warning aeroplanes fly over the proscribed area night and day and bomb cattle or tribesmen if seen in the area Fortified villages and towers are also permitted targets The damage caused is usually slight, building material is cheap and construction of a primitive kind The idea behind the process is to bring pressure to bear through economic and physical inconvenience This in some cases may be severe enough, generally the fugitives would move into the next valley with their cattle, instal themselves in caves and try to outlast the Government patience It is believed that casualties are rarely caused in proscribed areas The fine achievement of Flight-Lieutenant Jackson in supplying ammunition to an isolated detachment of Scouts and saving it from disaster has already been mentioned, as has

also the excellent work of the Transport Flight in carrying military personnel and stores to Wana when the ordinary roads could not be kept open for British lorries There can be no doubt whatever that the aeroplane is of great value in military operations on the Frontier, even if the bombing of proscribed areas is omitted It is interesting to note that the Afghans used the air-arm with success in suppressing the insurrection recently incited by the Shami Pir, described in a later paragraph Whether the system of bombing proscribed areas is worth while in view of the criticism it has attracted, especially from Indian Moslems, is another matter The attacks by German newspapers in which British aeroplane action on the Frontier is described as on a par with similar action by the Japanese in China, by General Franco and the Spanish Republicans, is utterly absurd

A brief sketch of close aerial support-action during the advance of Government troops from the Sham plain to Arsalkot by an official eye-witness will give an idea of how the aeroplane is used

The machine was a Hawker Audax Its armament consisted of twelve bombs carried under the wings, a Vickers machine-gun firing forwards through the airscrew and operated by the pilot, and a Lewis gun worked from a swivel in the rear cockpit The machine was equipped with a two-way radio telephony wireless set enabling the pilot to maintain communication with the troops and the landing ground

The 'plane started from the aerodrome in Miramshah in the Tochi and to show how short distances are in Waziristan it was over Arsalkot and the Faqir of Ipi's caves in ten minutes A minute or two later

it was over the British division slowly moving down the Shaktu towards the Faqir's quarters For two hours the 'plane circled over the column The advance guard, the main body with its mules and the rearguard were plainly visible to the observer, so too were the picquets on the heights on each side protecting the advance Every bit of country was scanned to see that tribesmen were not creeping up *nullahs* to attack the troops, or to make sure that some picquet had not signalled by altering its ground strips, that it was being attacked Sometimes the pilot and his observer would get glimpses of lurking tribesmen Then the pilot would put the machine into a vertical dive and having dropped a few bombs would pull up into a steep zoom, while the observer kept the tribesmen's heads down with his Lewis gun Now and again the 'plane would dive down to drop a reconnaissance report Finally having run out of bombs the pilot wirelessed to Miranshah for a relief aeroplane which quickly arrived and a quarter of an hour later the plane was back in Miranshah Quick and efficient work

The episode of the Shami Pir deserves mention, not only because of its importance, but because it shows how easily the tribes in the British tribal hinterland can be incited to follow a military adventure in Afghanistan The real name of the Pir is Saiyyid Muhammed Sadi He is an Arab of Damascus, an accomplished linguist, and is married to a German woman He was for some time in Kabul in 1924 and is related by marriage to Muhammed Tarzi, father-in-law of the ex-Amir, Amanullah The appellation, Shami Pir (the Syrian holy man), was conferred on

him by the tribes His object was unquestionably to raise an insurrection in favour of the deposed monarch For some time he did not show his hand, contenting himself with settling disputes, and giving out that his chief object was to collect funds for the repair of a mosque in Damascus This was an obvious blind, and one wonders why he was ever allowed to proceed to the Frontier on arriving in Karachi Someone had blundered After a couple of months he threw off the mask and summoned the tribes to attack the reigning dynasty on the ground that it was unlawfully withholding the throne from Amanullah He seemed to be amply provided with funds and offered a high figure, 40*r* Kabuli, a month for each recruit There was soon a general drift of tribesmen towards the border, but no considerable parties appear to have crossed it by the time insurgents on the Afghan side had come into collision with Afghan troops British aircraft were carrying out daily reconnaissances along the Durand line and were constantly under fire

The existence of a colony of Sulaiman Kheyl Ghilzais in Zermelan south of the Gumal in British territory has already been mentioned It seems that the Pir worked on their feelings and induced them, as also a number of nomad Sulaiman Kheyl who had stayed behind in Zermelan because of a dispute they had had with the Afghan government, to join him His *lashkar* thus formed moved across the Durand line on June 20th Meanwhile other Sulaiman Kheyl in Afghanistan had risen against the Kabul authorities They were later joined by the Pir's *lashkar* and soon came into collision with Afghan

troops, who were supported by ten aircraft The insurgents were driven into the hills on the Durand line, but were not finally dispersed until the Afghans had been heavily reinforced The result might have been very different if the British authorities had not strained every nerve to induce the Syrian adventurer to place himself in their hands But for this thousands of Wazirs and Mahsuds would have joined the Sulaiman Kheyl insurgents, in which case the Afghan general might easily have found the proposition too heavy for him Unrest had already spread along the border, there was a rising of Shinwaris and Mohmands in the Jalalabad province near the Khyber and an initial success of the insurgents might have brought on a hostile combination that would have involved a serious threat to the Kabul throne The British authorities put the Pir in an aeroplane and flew him down to Karachi whence he was shipped off to Basrah It was fortunate for both governments, Afghan and British, that the matter ended as it did The episode is a fresh illustration of the dangerous reactions of Afghan politics on the British side of the border The danger is equally great from the Amir's point of view, which, as is observed elsewhere, is a strong reason for close co-operation between the two governments in evolving a policy of border pacification

From the constitutional point of view the war in Waziristan has been a question of suppressing a series of insurrections against the paramount power of Britain In such circumstances it would be almost a misnomer to discuss questions of strategy In broad outline the objective of the British military com-

manders seems to have been to move rapidly into the heart of Mahsud country, thereby dividing tribal counsels and preventing the tribe as a whole from declaring itself hostile to Government This was accomplished Efforts were made to visit centres of tribal unrest, attacks were delivered on tribal groups either by ground forces or from the air, not always involving heavy penalties on the insurgents As to the latter's scheme of war, whoever is responsible for tribal tactics, there is no doubt that in the surrounding circumstances the plan adopted of isolated attacks by small bodies of tribesmen on Scout posts, Khassadar posts, road picquets and convoys, in other words a campaign of harassment combined with a refusal to offer battle, was calculated to create the maximum of difficulty for the British commanders, and to make a practical solution almost impossible Faced with attack from the air, with roads facilitating the movement of troops in lorries and armoured cars, and rapidly mobile forces like the Scouts, tribal leaders would in any case have found it difficult to provision large *lashkars* and still more difficult to get them away safely after an engagement Because this essential fact was grasped by tribal leaders, tribal forces opposed to British brigades rarely exceeded a few hundreds This meant that it was never possible to inflict a heavy defeat on the tribesmen In fact military occupation of the country and the economic dislocation it involves appear to have been the heaviest form of pressure on the tribal community

The question naturally presents itself, why do the tribes continue hostile? Religious fervour has waned, it is not difficult for the tribes concerned

to move on the Faqir of Ipi if so disposed The conclusion to which experts, military and political, appear to have come, is that so-called war pays better than peace, with its allowances and road-making and repairing, which means hard manual work To carry a rifle is pleasanter than to handle a spade or pickaxe While disturbed conditions prevail Mahsuds make profitable contracts for supplying outposts, the Wana Brigade, carrying the mails, large-scale movements of troops mean new road contracts for which coolies can be hired, the profits speedily compensate for the "heavy fines" imposed, to maintain constant insecurity on the roads is an unquestionable asset for those who hope to profit from making trouble Insecurity on the roads means more Khassadars; there are now 2,000 of them on what is a generous scale of pay, 25 rupees a month In addition two grades of officers draw 100 and 70 rupees a month respectively These Khassadar allowances are shared among the families of those serving and must constitute an appreciable addition to the family budget

There is something to be said for the theory outlined above, but in all probability the majority of the tribes would prefer peace with reasonable prospects of economic self-sufficiency And, too, though religious fanaticism may to some extent have died down, the political agitation which is still kept up on the Frontier has a disturbing influence on the tribal mind This is an important factor, difficult to eliminate Over and above all other disturbing elements is the absence of some form of tribal government, the decay of tribal responsibility

British Frontier administration has attracted scathing criticism from political India, especially in view of what is regarded as the fiasco in Waziristan In 1923 the Legislative Assembly gave the policy of peaceful penetration its blessing, now it attacks British administration in the Frontier Province root and branch Bombing methods are characterized as equally brutal as those practised by the Japanese and Spanish Nationals, even British-owned newspapers suggest a revision of Frontier policy Some of them are inclined to doubt whether the bombing of villages and fortified homesteads in proscribed areas is worth while, in view of foreign criticism and the objections of Indian politicians, especially of the Moslems

The Hindu Congress, the strongest political party in India, regards or professes to regard, the position in Waziristan as deliberately created by British Imperialism, in order to justify its control of the Indian army, British Imperialists do not want peace If the border were pacified there would no longer be an excuse for the maintenance of so large a British force in India What the Congress policy is, is not clear They talk of non-violent methods, they must know that Hindu *satyagraha* would not appeal to the arrogant Moslem of the border hills, what they really mean is that the Frontier should be governed by a Congress ministry which would have complete control of the tribal areas and act under the orders of the Congress High Command A necessary corollary would be the handing over of military control in India to a Congress ministry at the centre

With Moslem politicians, on the other hand, an

essential element in their political creed is that the Frontier and the Panjab must be predominantly Moslem Congress government in those regions would mean, for the Moslem, political death With practically two-thirds of the best fighting material in India in Moslem hands the danger from the enmity of the political Hindu would to a large extent be neutralized The Moslems yield but little to the Hindu in their dislike of British Imperialism and of what they regard as its policy , to deprive the Pathan hillmen of their independence To the Moslem it is immaterial that the hillmen should loot the Hindu of the plains They would, of course, with a non-Congress government at Peshawar make an effort to draw the two segments of the Pathan race together, the tribes of the five agencies and of the six administered districts

A strong group of caste Hindu politicians, known as the Hindu Mahasabha, who, unlike the Congress, place the emphasis on Hindu predominance rather than on Indian nationalism, differ from both Congress and Moslems, in desiring to see the Frontier, especially tribes like the Wazirs and Mahsuds, rendered innocuous from the military point of view, even if they have to rely on British Imperialism to effect the metamorphosis The Mahasabha does not believe in the loyalty of the Pathan Congress men to a Hindu Congress They are quite convinced that the Moslem North aims at independence in the event of a British withdrawal, and they know that such independence would mean a *guerre à l'outrance* with Hinduism

The opinion of educated Pathans with pro-British

sympathies on the problems raised by the military difficulties the British are facing in Waziristan deserves a passing notice People of this type find it difficult to understand British policy on the Frontier. Why, for example, has Britain kept the two wings of the Frontier, the Pathans of the agencies and the Pathans of the districts, apart? With self-government in the districts it is impossible to maintain a system of the kind indefinitely The difficulty of union is enhanced because, thanks to British indifference towards the hill tribes, the two groups are at different stages in cultural and economic development With Urdu as a means of education the Pathans of the districts have to a great degree lost their ancient culture and tradition The impasse is attributed to the selfishness of British Imperialism in contenting itself with making its position secure on the Frontier by means of roads and the military occupation of strategic points as in Waziristan, and washing its hands of all responsibility for the moral and material progress of the tribesmen whose country it has invaded This school of thought has no practical solution to offer beyond the slow process of developing the economic resources of the tribal hinterland, providing educational facilities, medical relief, and in this way approximating the standard of culture and political development in the hills to that prevailing in the plains Then would the synthesis of the Frontier be complete

The British Press, despite its preoccupation with European politics, has at times turned its attention to Waziristan The general impression is that Frontier policy needs a complete overhaul One leading

paper, the *Manchester Guardian*, suggests a reversion to the Curzon policy of withdrawing the troops to the administrative border and policing the hinterland with tribal levies We no longer need a heavily fortified frontier, the Russian danger has disappeared, Afghanistan is friendly, peaceful and independent The emphasis should be on economic improvement The Indian correspondent of the same paper suggests military evacuation of the hinterland and the handing over of the administration of tribal areas to the Congress government at Peshawar This would, of course, be impracticable so long as Britain controls the army One might comment further that though Russia at the moment seems to harbour no ambitions against India the Russian government is stronger than ever and a change of policy might revive the Russian menace

Public opinion will be a factor of importance in the ultimate decision of the question of policy in Waziristan That heavy expenditure will be involved is inevitable which will react injuriously on the interests of India as a whole With opinion so divided as it is now it seems unlikely that any measure of support for a practical policy will develop in the near future The position would improve with a strong Federal Government prepared to take a broad view of the Frontier problem

The course of events in Waziristan has been dealt with at some length because the position there throws into strong relief the different phases of the Frontier problem and exposes the difficulties British statesmen have to face in endeavouring to find a solution It is an imperial responsibility which cannot much longer

be shirked with impunity in Waziristan, there more than in any other part of the Frontier a solution is urgently necessary

The larger question of border policy will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. A few brief remarks on the special aspects of the question as it affects Waziristan will not, however, be out of place at this stage For two years groups of the more adventurous among the Wazirs and Mahsuds have defied the might of Britain In that small country where every man who can carry a rifle is a soldier and *ipso facto* a member of the tribal *lashkar*, the fighting strength of the total population may be put at 50,000 men At an outside estimate not more than a fifth of the tribal strength has been involved in the recent hostilities, yet the British authorities have thought it necessary to mobilize nearly 40,000 men, equipped with artillery, aeroplanes, machine-guns, tanks, armoured cars and all the paraphernalia of modern warfare What has been the result? After two years of continuous hostilities it looks as if we were back again at the starting-point

Even in normal times since 1920 the armed forces of Britain maintained in Waziristan are over 20,000 strong, consisting of roughly 15,000 troops and followers, 5,000 Scouts and 2,000 Khassadars, not to mention roughly 1,000 Frontier Constabulary outside tribal boundaries The cost of these establishments, combined with political charges, would be amply sufficient to support the whole population of Waziristan at its present standard of living Between three and four millions sterling have been spent on military campaigns since 1919 If a third

of this had been spent on economic development and in extending the road system there would be a different story to tell We have reached an impasse and a new orientation of policy is inevitable

As already observed the breakdown of the system of tribal responsibility is the principal cause of our failure in Waziristan Unless this can be re-established on sound lines there is no alternative to taking over the country and administering it up to the Durand line This would involve partial disarmament at least, which would be a difficult and expensive affair , it seems therefore more expedient to attempt the alternative of setting up a form of indirect rule in the tribal communities. To begin with the network of roads must be extended into every tribal centre of any importance, with tracks suitable to the rapid movement of infantry linking up every village and hamlet with the main roads In this way it should be possible to send small armed detachments to any village in the country within a few hours, lorries being used up to the point where the tracks take off It is suggested that a motor road should be built through Madda Kheyl country to the Afghan border, linking it up by transverse roads with the Kaitu and Wana through Shawal, the Wana road being taken as near the Durand line as possible Such a road would be useful in keeping tribesmen from the British side of the line from interfering in Afghan politics

As regards a new method of tribal government, if the tribesmen realize that the British government is really in earnest they might be induced to attempt to set up some form of central authority , a possible

method would be that the *jirgahs* of subsections should send their representatives to a central *jirgah*, which on its side would elect an executive which in all important matters would act in accordance with the wishes of the *jirgah* *Jirgahs* of subsections might be responsible for maintaining order in their own localities through their own nominees As regards police, obviously the executive must have behind it, an adequate force to carry out their orders and enforce decrees Here the question presents itself, why not police the tribe from within instead of protecting the administered districts from the criminal propensities of its members by forces disposed along the border? In other words why not attempt to raise a reliable force to be stationed in tribal territory capable of keeping the tribesmen in order and preventing them from committing offences either in their own or in British or Afghan territory? The 2,000 Khassadars are not sufficiently reliable nor adequate in point of numbers to assume responsibility of the kind. It would probably be necessary to double the force and at the same time to introduce some form of discipline At the outset a proportion of the officers would have to be borrowed; some form of training would be given to officers and men recruited locally The force would be paid by Government and would be under the control of the political authorities, but subject to their control would be available for use by the executive It would be essential that the tribal *jirgah* should lay down an immutable law that death caused by tribal police in carrying out their duties should not involve a blood feud Scouts would be available to assist the tribal police, when it might

be necessary to use more force than the police could be expected to develop against a group of recalcitrant tribesmen With such a force at their disposal the executive of *maliks* should be able to control the activities of fanatical mullahs and other disturbers of the peace With the assistance of the political authorities it should be possible under such a system to compose blood feuds and other disputes and so evolve order from chaos, the first essential to economic well-being.

At the outset it would be advisable to maintain both Scouts and Constabulary at strength. If the system proved a success they would in course of time be greatly reduced, in fact the saving effected might ultimately equal the additional cost of maintaining an efficient tribal police It should also be possible in time to withdraw most of the military garrisons

Economic development is as essential to border pacification as internal security That such development is possible in Waziristan is beyond question It is in fact doubtful whether, as a result of the insecurity of life, the economic resources of any tribal territory have been fully exploited Government must be prepared to make grants, to give loans on easy terms for agricultural improvements, providing irrigational facilities, bringing new land under cultivation by terracing the hillsides, planting orchards, growing vegetables for the markets in the cities of the plains Fruit and vegetable-growing should be very profitable industries with roads and motor-lorries making possible the rapid marketing of the produce

There should be reasonable educational facilities, which as far as possible should be vocational It might be possible to institute cottage industries in some places, if cheap electric power could be made available The Gumal river, it is believed, offers the possibility of a combined hydro-electric and irrigational scheme of considerable magnitude , this might be worth considering

What with enlistment in the army, in the Scouts and Khassadars, with work on the roads, and the labour demands of agricultural development, there should be adequate scope for the energies of most of the tribesmen

A scheme of tribal self-government under British supervision as here suggested might have a reasonable chance of success if it was made quite clear that the British government was determined to see it through

If self-government makes reasonable progress in the Frontier Province the example would help across the border Devised in the interests of the tribesmen themselves it might attract Moslem support both in the Frontier Province and in India generally , there is no reason why it should not be approved by the Federal Government when constituted With a favourable political background the chances of success would be greatly enhanced And ultimately Mahsud and Wazir might come to feel that it would be worth while to throw in their lot with the Pathans of the plains.

Chapter IX

FUTURE POLICY

DEFENCE is a reserved subject under the federal scheme This is, and always will be, a grievance to political India, at all events to the more extreme groups Before the War the British government could have handled the Frontier problem on its own lines, without regard to possible repercussions in India , there was no public opinion of any consequence on the matter The position is very different now Public opinion will no longer tolerate a system which involves enormous expenditure with little to show in the way of definite progress As has been seen already there is a diversity of views on the Frontier situation among the different political groups , they agree in at least one respect, in condemning root and branch the present policy, or lack of policy and its results It is clear then that the problem can no longer be treated in isolation , the British government must endeavour, in deciding on its future course of action, so to shape its policy as to attract the maximum of support from political India and especially from the Moslems of the Frontier and Indian Moslems generally

Few would advocate a policy of complete disarmament and the administration of tribal country up to the Durand line The cost would probably

run into twenty or thirty millions sterling The loss of life would be heavy; there would be a series of campaigns extending over several years Most of the Indian army would be absorbed in the operations, to attempt this in the present international situation would be sheer insanity The cost of holding the country down after conquest and of administering it, even if indirect methods were adopted, would probably be at least double the heavy expenditure of to-day, there would be practically no revenue The British government would have to assume a new responsibility—to protect its disarmed tribes from their neighbours on the other side of the Durand line Apart from the almost insuperable difficulties of such a policy there is the fact that it would alienate still further the Moslems of India and of the Frontier Province It might have serious repercussions in Afghanistan Hindu politicians generally would condemn it, though they might secretly regard the subjugation of the Pathan as a step towards their assumption of the control of the defence of India

One school of military opinion holds that disarmament is not so difficult as would at first sight appear It is suggested that it might be done piecemeal There is something to be said for this view Take, for example, the Peshawar border If we could get Bajaur well under the control of one of the Chiefs or Khans of that country, as in the case of Dir, Swat and Amb, we need not concern ourselves with the question of disarmament in that part of the tribal hinterland The Chiefs would keep the tribes quiet, helped, if necessary, with British subsidies for road-making and other purposes, and with arms

and ammunition Cut off from Bajaur, with the "assured" clans on the south, the disarmament of the upper Mohmands might not be a very difficult problem, especially if the Kabul government co-operated by disarming the Mohmands on their side of the border In Tirah the problem would be more or less intractable until the country is covered with a network of roads In Waziristan, if the policy of road-making already suggested is followed, the tribesmen might ultimately be deprived of their rifles if they provoked Government after the settlement that must shortly be made with them Here again success would depend largely on Afghan co-operation on the other side of the line

Complete pacification of the tribal hinterland, though it may seem the only logical course for a great empire to follow, must be ruled out as beyond the sphere of practical politics A school of thought which goes to the opposite extreme advocates withdrawal altogether to the foothills, leaving the tribes to an unfettered independence A modern counterpart of the Roman military wall or the Great Wall of China would be set up in the shape of a dense barbed-wire entanglement, with an electrified wire running through it, from one end of the administrative border to the other, military posts being located at short enough intervals to make continuous patrolling possible, night patrolling being facilitated by the use of searchlights By methods such as these, it is contended, British districts could be rendered immune from attack and the aggressive tribesmen left to their own devices

The scheme has not attracted much support

There are many objections The Durand line which now divides the tribes of the mountain belt would disappear, and both Afghan and British Frontier tribes would unite in hostility to India and the British They would await their opportunity, when the Empire was engaged in war elsewhere, to burst in overwhelming force through the barriers Apart from this the country beyond the wire entanglements would be in a continuous state of unrest, which would be a menace to Afghanistan as well as to India . the Amir would be compelled to reassert his suzerainty over the tribes as far as the British administrative border. The Afghans would occupy Swat, lower Mohmand country the Khyber, the Kurram Valley. Tochi. Jandola Even with this it is unlikely that they would be able

serving under the Governor of the Frontier Province, and a general tightening up of relations with the tribesmen Tribal aggression would be more promptly dealt with, interference from the Frontier politician would be less likely under such a régime It is, of course, possible that the result might be to improve the position At the same time unless the change were accompanied with some form of economic development and with improved relations with British territory, it might breed a sullen temper in the tribesmen which, in the end, would enhance instead of diminishing their hostility towards the British protectorate Military government in the tribal areas would be regarded with disfavour by the politicians of the Frontier Province, they would be disinclined to co-operate with British military officers in carrying out protective measures To Indian politicians the scheme would be equally repugnant

The present policy, so far as it can be called a policy, has never been clearly defined It aims at establishing peaceful relations, at strengthening British control over the tribes Described briefly it is a policy of peaceful penetration to be pursued with caution, only as opportunity offers Practical expression has been given to it in Waziristan in recent years, the terms of peace recently announced to the belligerent tribes in that region carry it still further Another example of the methods followed is the agreement concluded a couple of years ago with the Afridi tribes, providing for the opening up of their country by means of a road through the heart of Tirah The construction of a military road through the Gandab valley in Mohmand country is another instance.

Opportunities are not always followed up In 1935, for example, the upper Mohmands deliberately forced on a campaign, they have for years provoked the British government almost beyond endurance, yet Government refrained from taking a step that would have gone a long way towards bringing them under control—the extension of the Gandab valley road through their country and Bajaur to the Chitral–Malakand road The effect of this action would have been to expose them to rapid converging movements, a contingency the tribesmen hate The fear of being caught between two fires distracts tribal counsels and upsets their tactics, it acts as a strong inducement to seek peace and ensue it In a future campaign the existence of such a road would make it possible to reduce the Mohmands to extremity The feelings of the tribe on the subject were shown by their terror that Government would include the making of the road in their terms of peace The outstanding importance of occupying strategic points in the Bazar valley in Tirah has already been noticed On more than one occasion Government would have been thoroughly justified in occupying the valley, Lord Morley lacked the vision and moral courage to do so in 1908, we might have grasped the nettle in 1921, the Afridis would have had no moral ground for objection if, after their unprovoked attack on Peshawar city in 1930, we had retaliated by improving our strategic position in Tirah Direct administration of the valley would have been unnecessary, the *maliks* and elders would have been left to run their country themselves under British supervision All we need is a military road through

the Bazar valley and the occupation of points of vantage

So much for lost opportunities The policy of peaceful penetration must nevertheless hold the field, no other is possible in existing political conditions in India But there must be continuity, there must be firmness, a clearer definition of objectives, a readiness to utilize every opportunity of improving our relations with the tribes It is a long-range policy demanding patience as well as insistence Perhaps the strongest reason for the lack of progress in assimilating the tribes into Indian polity is the British failure to assist them in setting up some form of responsible authority in their little republics Many of our troubles on the Frontier might have been avoided had such an authority been in existence If, for example, the Mahsuds and Tori Kheyl had had some form of responsible government there would have been no war in Waziristan last year and a million and a half of money and hundreds of lives would have been saved Mahsud opinion was against creating trouble, so was opinion among the Tori Kheyl and the Wazirs generally Responsible *maliks* and elders were, however, unable to command adequate force to control the Faqir of Ipi and the young men under his banner spoiling for a fight All that we have done so far in the direction indicated is to create a government party in the tribes by paying allowances to various *maliks* and elders supposed to have influence with the tribesmen Most tribes are honeycombed with factions and feuds which make co-operation among allowance-holders difficult, the allowances paid are not adequate to purchase material

support Here it may be observed that Government favours are not always bestowed in the right quarters There is a substratum of truth in what Dr Khan Sahib (now Premier of the Frontier ministry) told the central Legislative Assembly at Simla in September 1935, when addressing them on Frontier Policy Assistant political officers as a class were, he said, responsible for much of the trouble on the border (They are, by the way, mostly Pathan) It is their duty to interpret the feelings and wishes of the tribe to Government through British Political Agents This responsibility they do not always fulfil They are, he said, mostly corrupt and create trouble because it gives them opportunities for making money Every Political Agent knows this, but he has not the courage to admit it openly He, Dr Khan Sahib, knew Assistant Political Officers who had piled up fortunes by intrigue and mischief-making Some British officers were, he thought, afraid of their subordinates

The charge is too comprehensive, especially when he makes the assertion that the vested interests of the Assistant Political Officers make reform difficult I have known Pathan Political Officers who were both efficient and high-principled , on the other hand there are others who would not find it easy to defend themselves against Dr Khan Sahib's indictment Unless the British Political Agent is experienced in handling frontier tribes, unless he knows his tribes thoroughly and is easy of access to all tribesmen, there is always a danger of his being unduly influenced in tribal matters by an unscrupulous subordinate, especially in the choice of allowance-

holders The value of these *maliki* allowances is discounted by the jealousy caused in some cases by the selections made; this jealousy is all the greater when the holder has been chosen to ensure his good behaviour or because he has squared the Assistant Political Officer. Doubtless in the majority of cases recognized *maliks* of long standing have a useful influence with the tribesmen, still the weight and authority of the council of *maliks* would be considerably enhanced if some could be chosen by popular vote Given a representative body of *maliks* could it control the tribe? The answer is that control is possible only up to a point, without some form of semi-military or police force behind them *maliks* can hardly be expected to deal with a strong group of recalcitrant tribesmen Often the *malik* hierarchy is defeated by the mullah who can at times get together a tribal *lashkar* more quickly than the *maliks* What is wanted is a strong group of *maliks* really representative of the tribe who would select from time to time a small executive committee to manage tribal affairs and conduct relations with government To make such a scheme effective it is essential that there should be behind the committee an armed force in which every section of the tribe would be represented, to carry out its decisions It is suggested that the *Khassadar* force responsible for policing the roads might be enlarged to a sufficient extent to meet the purpose It would be under the general supervision of the Political Agent and paid by Government It should in most cases find its own arms, a certain amount of ammunition might be supplied The cost would be considerable, but if the experiment

were a success it could to a great extent be met by reductions in the Frontier constabulary, since the tribal levies would be responsible for controlling their own lawless elements and preventing offences in British administered territory There is some force in the argument put forward by critics of British Frontier administration that better results might be expected if instead of employing Frontier tribesmen on a semi-military basis to protect the border against raids from their own people, they were organized as a police force in their own country to keep a watch on tribesmen likely to cause trouble

A system of tribal government is almost as essential for the general welfare of the tribes as in their relations with the British authorities Like all political problems the Frontier problem is largely economic It is not so because life is impossible unless the tribesmen supplement their resources by raiding the plains In ordinary times the value of looted property has rarely exceeded £10,000 or £12,000 a year, which could only have an infinitesimal effect on the million and a half Pathans within raiding distance of British villages On the Afghan side economic conditions are much the same as on the British side , yet border crime is not chronic to the same extent in Afghanistan as with us Natural resources are of course limited in the hills as compared with the plains, but the truth is that economic development in tribal territory is almost everywhere hampered by feuds and lawlessness It would be interesting to know how much tribal land is left fallow because those who own it would, if they tried to cultivate it, be exposed to the rifle fire of a blood-feud enemy from his tower on

the other side of the valley, perhaps a mile or so away Men will not try to win new fields from the hillside by terracing, if they can only do so at the risk of their lives A large proportion of tribal capital is invested in rifles, if a tribesman put the money he spends on a Lee-Enfield rifle into bringing new land under cultivation, in planting fruit trees, increasing his stock of cattle, his standard of living might easily be improved by 50 per cent With peace in the land many tribesmen would undoubtedly develop the stretch of hillside owned by them

Improvement in material conditions is unquestionably an essential element in a policy of peaceful penetration The standard of living of the tribesmen has improved considerably since the War, chiefly owing to the huge sums of money spent on roads, the Khyber railway, contracts for supplies, acquisition of land by government, tribal allowances, payment for political services and the like Some of these sources of income are growing less prolific, which may lead to trouble In point of fact the decline in prosperity in Mahsud country after the lavish expenditure during the War years (1919–21) was one of the causes of the recent outbreak Government must be prepared to spend money in order to improve the economic prospects of the tribesmen, it would be better spent in this way than on a useless campaign There is scope for the expansion of agriculture It might be worth while to loan money for constructing new fields, for improvement in irrigation, e g by building tanks for the storage of water, for planting orchards Fruit of fine quality can be grown almost anywhere in the Frontier hills, grapes, apples, peaches,

apricots, figs, etc., especially where there is water The demand for fruit in India, especially in the summer when little can be grown in the plains, is insatiable, and where there are roads and lorries fruit grown by Pathan tribesmen could be easily marketed in good condition in the cities of India There would be an equally valuable market for vegetables Refrigerating vans are now available on Indian trains, fruit and vegetables from the Frontier could be sent to any part of India The preparation of dried fruit is a flourishing industry in Afghanistan, it might very well be adopted as a subsidiary industry in the border hills There are other possibilities of utilizing the surplus energy of the hill population It has been suggested in official circles that opportunities for vocational training might be offered to some of the tribesmen Pathans are intelligent and make good motor-drivers or mechanics, if they were given a suitable training it might be possible to start cottage industries on a communal basis or otherwise in their hills Power would be necessary and the experiment could only be successful where cheap power could be made available There are many places on the Frontier where electric current could be produced by the use of water power Already on the Malakand there is a powerful hydro-electric installation where current is very cheaply produced, from that point if it could be spared current could be taken into Swat and possibly into Bajaur Power could be inexpensively produced on the Kabul river, both for Mohmand country and northern Tirah There should be similar possibilities on the Gumal river for the benefit of the Mahsuds Raw material

would be a difficulty, wool from Afghanistan could be taken up fairly cheaply into the hills and might be spun and woven into cloth, the cost of importing raw cotton from Peshawar should not be prohibitive. Weaving of blankets and carpets might prove successful

The Indian army could absorb several thousand men from the Frontier tribes, provided the authorities were assured of their reliability, a matter of some doubt until the effects of political agitation from India have worn off The Afridis are still anxious to be restored to favour with the Army, as was shown last April when the Viceroy was welcomed in the Khyber by a great *jirgah* of Afridis. They told the Viceroy that at one time 6,000 of their young men were serving in the Forces and urged that a military career should again be opened to them, otherwise they might have to seek service in Afghanistan, which might be politically undesirable The Viceroy's reply was non-committal, the question would be examined Service was, he told the *maliks*, open to Afridis in the Waziristan Scouts Doubtless the present embargo will not be removed until the Afridis agree to construct roads in their country Government would certainly be wise to keep in their hands a valuable bargaining counter of the kind

Army pay and pensions would constitute an important addition to tribal resources, if the tribesmen could again win the confidence of the military authorities A point on which emphasis should be laid is the civilizing effect on the tribesmen of service in the Army as a result of contact with British officers and with men of other clans from British districts

serving in the same regiment or unit, to say nothing of the general education and discipline instilled in the Army Life in a garrison town helps to smooth away some of the roughness of character of the unsophisticated tribesmen

If the tribesmen have suffered from the loss of Army service it has been more than made good to them by the prospects of service in the tribal levies or Khassadars, a form of service practically non-existent before the War The number varies, but it is believed that it now exceeds 10,000, affording with the present rates of pay income enough to maintain something like 20,000 tribal families

Let it be emphasized again that the first essential to an improvement in material standards is internal tranquillity The suggested experiment in self-government would, as already noted, cost the Government money, but it would be well spent on a really constructive policy The expenditure of a couple of millions sterling spread over five years or so would work wonders Much would be spent on roads A policy of road development solved the problem of the Scottish highlands after 1745 A permanent road through a lawless countryside hardly ever fails to exercise a civilizing influence

There might in some cases be an alternative to setting up a tribal authority based on the representative principle How the Mian Gul of Swat evolved a well-ordered state out of tribal chaos has been described elsewhere His steadying influence on the erratic politics of Swat and Buner has been of the greatest value to the British His neighbour on the east, the Nawab of Amb has some influence, which

might perhaps be extended over the tribes on the Hazara border The Nawab of Dir, whose territories adjoin the Mian Gul's country on the west, is suzerain of a strong tribal confederacy His hold over his tribes is not, however, of the strongest, good roads would improve his position and he might be encouraged to open up tribal territory by this means Government might assist him to improve his military position in other ways If this were done the paramount power might have to interfere to prevent misrule likely to bring on insurrection as is the policy in Indian States generally Adjoining the Nawab's territory on the south is Bajaur, already described as one of the storm centres of the Frontier Much of the trouble of recent years with the Mohmands and in the Malakand protected area has been started among the Bajaur tribes, inflammable material in the hands of the fanatical mullah Twenty-five or thirty years ago Bajaur was controlled to some extent by the Nawab of Nawagai, rival of the Nawab of Dir Of late the tribes, such as the Kandaharis, Safis, Mamunds, Utman Kheyl, Salarzai, have been left very much to themselves Badshah Gul, who has succeeded his father, the late Haji of Turangzai, has a fortified village in Kandahari territory, he has, as already observed, some influence in Bajaur and Mohmand country He is, however, hopelessly anti-British There are several Khans in Bajaur—Khar, Nawagai, and Pashat for example The Khan of Khar is the strongest and most influential, he is related by marriage to the Nawab of Dir and has the latter's support against his rival of Nawagai He is not popular with the tribes and is hated by the mullah

hierarchy, but he has character and drive and in alliance with the Nawab of Dir and with British support, which he is anxious to obtain, he might be able to exercise a restraining influence at least over some of the tribes, especially if the Mohmand road were brought through to Bajaur A few motorable roads through tribal territory would facilitate his operations Here there is a prospect of getting the work of pacification done by others in a manner natural to Frontier conditions The Peshawar Red Shirt disciple of the Hindu Congress and the Delhi politician might declaim against a disgraceful alliance between autocracy and British Imperialism to suppress the independence of the men of the hills There would be ample material for a satisfactory defence against the critics Are anarchy and chaos freedom? Is the ignorant and fanatical tribesman, a prey to every religious imposter, a true democrat? Under firm rule, with peace in the land, the majority of the people would be far happier In any case the British government, responsible as it is for the safety of the Peshawar villages, could hardly neglect an opportunity of pacifying this stormy countryside, the breeding ground of endless forays against its subjects Support of the Khan of Khar would of course be contingent on reasonably good government A further advantage from a policy of the kind would be the steadying influence that a peaceful Bajaur would exert over upper Mohmand country The "assured" clans on the Peshawar border (the lower Mohmands) are on the side of the British denied support from Bajaur the upper Mohmands might be expected to abandon their attitude of intransigence

A road through their country would of course be essential. Another matter of urgent importance is the demarcation of the undefined section of the Durand line which is supposed to divide the Afghan Mohmands from those within the British sphere When this is done there will be no excuse for Afghan Mohmands to espouse the quarrels of their kinsmen on the British side of the line It might be desirable to push up a road to the Afghan boundary with a Khassadar post or two at points commanding the routes between the two blocks of tribal territory If at the same time the Mohmands could be induced to set up a tribal authority of the kind already suggested Government might be prepared to initiate a programme of economic development It might not of course be possible to carry through such a scheme offhand, much will depend on the progress of a policy of peaceful penetration in other parts of the Frontier But if the tribes could be convinced that Government had decided irrevocably on such a policy, it would act as a deterrent to misbehaviour and ultimately the tribal leaders might of their own accord invite Government co-operation in opening up their country

In attempting to draw the teeth of the Afridis, Government will doubtless take the first opportunity of reopening the question of a road through Tirah to Kohat It seems likely that the clans will ultimately approach Government of their own accord unless anti-British influences from Peshawar which broke down the earlier arrangements, should re-assert themselves The road will presumably be taken to Bagh, the principal centre of Afridi influence The

possibility of driving a road westward through the Khurmana to the Kurram valley should be kept in view : it would open up the country of the Massuzai (an Orakzai tribe) which at times has shown truculence The occupation of strategic points in the Bazar valley would perhaps be reconsidered should the Afridis again provoke an invasion of their country If they should evolve some form of self-government in the various tribes they might go further and set up a council representing the whole Afridi confederacy As remarked already the Afridi is hard-headed and more sophisticated than most of the tribes , he would, it might be expected, react favourably to a system which, while greatly improving his economic position, left his independence practically intact

Waziristan is already covered with a network of roads , strategic points are occupied in force The question of evolving a system of tribal government and of introducing a scheme of economic development in that country has been discussed in a separate chapter

Wherever possible Government should assist in establishing a really sound scheme of primary education in tribal country A good beginning has been made in providing medical relief The system should be extended as far as possible Money spent in this way would be well worth while

At this stage the question might well be asked whether a rough and ready system of tribal government would stand the strain of fanatical influences Much would depend on the prestige of the religious leaders and on the existence or otherwise of a grievance

to exploit The unimportant mischief-maker could ordinarily be dealt with by the *maliks*, especially if they had the tribal police at their backs With most of the tribes unless there was some grievance or insult to Islam, real or imaginary, to exploit, the religious appeal might very well fall flat And where settled conditions exist and the tribal economy is reasonably satisfactory the mullah hierarchy will find it difficult to set themselves in opposition to the *maliks* Border fanaticism has a strong political tinge, it is largely a form of expression of the tribesmen's hatred of anything like foreign rule It is the link that welds the tribes together if threatened with encroachment from the Indian empire The bestowal on the Frontier Province of self-governing institutions and the handing over to a Pathan ministry of the administration of the province should, if these gifts had been accepted in the spirit in which they were offered, have helped to convince the tribesmen that the British were really friendly, that they had no desire to challenge his ideals, that they only wanted his friendship and co-operation. For this reason it is a matter for regret that the Hindu Congress were able to capture the province and create the impression that the British were playing them false and that the Pathan tribes should unite with the Hindu to expel them from India If moderate counsels should ultimately prevail among politicians of the province, or if a strong conservative government should be formed in the near future prepared to work in collaboration with the British Governor and officials, the effect on trans-border opinion should be salutary The tribes would certainly be encouraged by such a manifestation of

good will between the British and their kinsmen in the plains, to consider the possibility of improving the technique of their own administration, they would be satisfied that the British had no concern with their religion, no designs on their independence, in time there might be an attempt at *rapprochement* in some form between the two divisions of the Pathan community under the British protectorate Peaceful penetration requires infinite patience, it may take years to get results of any value, progress to a great extent will depend on the new rulers of the settled districts It may be objected that so long as the transborder people are armed to the teeth they will constitute a threat to their neighbours There is some force in the contention, but is it not almost certain that, given some measure of peace, security and prosperity across the border, if feuds can be composed and settlements made good, many tribesmen will be disinclined to lock up their capital in expensive rifles and will endeavour to liquidate them? The difficulty would be to find a ready market at anything like the prices paid.

The difficulty of bringing together the Pathans of the hills and the plains in a political synthesis has already formed the subject of comment The backwardness of the men of the hills as compared with the people of the districts is an adverse factor The difficulty is both economic and cultural There are practically no taxable resources in the hills, it may be a generation before the men of the hills can provide the cost of administration of their own country The late Sir Abdul Qaiyyum, a leading politician of the Frontier Province, used to refer to the two groups of

Pathans as the wings of an eagle The phrase hardly rings true with the wings so uneven Another point is that although several of the clans in Peshawar and Mardan have affinities with the great Yusafzai tribe that holds most of Swat, Dir and Bajaur, there is very little direct contact between the hills and the plains With the Mohmands, on the other hand, social and economic contacts are fairly close, at all events with the "assured" clans and their relations in the plains. The two great clans in Kohat, the Khataks and Bangash, have practically no trans-border relationship, the same is true of the Turis of the Kurram Only the Wazir fringe in Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu are in close association with Wazirs beyond the administrative boundary, in their case there is little difference culturally between the two groups.

This absence of clan affinities between the hills and the plains is an added complication On the other hand, service in the various Frontier Corps brings men on both sides of the foothills together and should help to smooth away inequalities A closer economic union should help to promote harmony Winter migrations work in the same direction In any case it is inevitable that self-government in the plains should react beyond the administrative boundary Subversive influences must of course be checked, if a Congress government countenanced anti-British agitation, obviously Britain would have to hand over the Frontier to them, or insist on forming a government that would work with the British political authorities There is no doubt that the co-operation of the Frontier ministry, controlling as it does the

police and the judiciary in the plains, will be essential to the political authorities across the border Such a partnership will undoubtedly entitle Frontier ministers to be consulted on questions of policy

Adverse influences from beyond the Durand line might seriously hamper progress in carrying out a policy of pacification in the British tribal hinterland For real and lasting success the strengthening of our friendly relations with Kabul is essential The close association of the British tribes with Afghanistan has been the subject of comment in earlier chapters of this book Our Mahsuds and Waziris only a few years ago carried Nadir Shah to victory and the Afghan throne, they are always ready to interfere in Afghan politics Material and moral progress in Afghanistan will have its reactions along the border; for example should the present dynasty decide to develop the country on western lines—of course with due consideration for Afghan prejudice and not *per saltum* as did Amanullah—it would have an excellent effect on tribal psychology. The Afghan has never loved Britain. For one thing he bitterly resented the futile invasion of 1839; he equally resented the unjustifiable attack on his country in 1878 And over and above all this sentimental grievance he has not forgotten that the empire founded by the first great Afghan ruler, Ahmad Shah Durani, included most of the Panjab. Kashmir, Sindh and the Frontier Province; he still regards the Indus as the boundary of Pathan nationalism. Subconsciously he feels that but for the British that empire might be result, at least the Indus valley might revert to its rightful owners. Another grievance was the retention by

Britain of the control of Afghan foreign relations till the last war of 1919; this was felt as an encroachment on Afghan independence That cause of complaint no longer exists and one result has been an improvement of British relations with Kabul, especially since Nadir Shah's restoration of the Durani dynasty The Afghans are beginning to realize that the British do not covet their country; that all they want is Afghan friendship. It is growing more obvious that a close alliance with Britain would help them to develop their resources and so make it possible for Afghanistan to take an honourable place in the comity of nations Everything should be done to stimulate this new friendship, essential as it is to India and to Britain That wise old statesman Amir Abdurrahman used to say that Russia would never venture to attack India if Afghanistan stood by the side of Britain, a strong Afghanistan in close alliance with Britain would make the North-West Frontier almost impregnable The advantages from a military and political point of view are indeed obvious It would be to the Amir's interest to assist in the pacification of the British border by stopping the arms traffic and discouraging the tribes from intriguing with the Afghan authorities against Britain With Britain his firm friend he need no longer look to the tribes on the British side of the boundary as his allies in a war with India It would be more to his advantage that they should cultivate the arts of peace as loyal subjects of the King-Emperor, thereby setting an example which Kabul might hope to see followed by their kinsmen on the Afghan side of the Durand line

If Afghanistan is to develop her military strength she must exploit her resources to the utmost These are varied and considerable, for example, she has extensive mineral deposits, iron, coal, copper, lead, asbestos, recent reports suggest oil in paying quantity, agriculture has great possibilities, hides, skins, carpets, wool, fruit (fresh and dried), furs, horses and sheep are among her articles of export Several kinds of manufacturing industries have been started, notably arms manufacture, but so far no striking progress has been made Technique, cheap power and capital are the principal necessities. There was a time when the Afghan government felt that for political reasons it was wise policy to close their doors to British enterprise; any favours shown to the British would have roused popular resentment. Other Europeans were accordingly invited to help This attitude is changing. there is no doubt that since a British Envoy has been stationed at Kabul and the Afghan Legation established in London feeling has steadily grown more friendly. The Afghans are beginning to realize that they can hardly

of pacification may perhaps be more effectively solved in Afghanistan than on our side of the Durand line

It is perhaps too early to expect Hindus to forget that the fighting hordes who for nearly a thousand years inflicted defeat and humiliation on their unhappy country were bred mostly in the Afghan highlands, and it would not be surprising if Hindu politicians, especially those belonging to the orthodox school, should regard a strong Afghanistan as a greater menace to India than if the Afghans were to continue weak and disunited There is some danger perhaps from the political point of view, but only if India herself is torn by dissensions Powerful and culturally developed, Afghanistan would exert a stronger gravitational pull than at present on the Pathans of the Frontier Province and on the Moslems of India generally if the breach between Hindu and Moslem in India should prove unbridgeable, and more especially if the British protectorate should be withdrawn It is impossible of course to eliminate all risk, the advantages offered by the suggested policy make it worth while to face up to it, it would be minimized so long as India remains a member of the British Commonwealth Afghanistan would give hostages to fortune by establishing herself on the sea, her military position would depend to a considerable degree on the maintenance of her communications with the outside world, in this she would be at the mercy of Britain Here let it be emphasized that Afghanistan considers herself allied to the British Empire and not to India alone In other words the position would be radically altered

if the British protectorate were withdrawn Another point which the Hindu extremist would do well to remember is that though Afghanistan even in an unfriendly mood would hesitate to challenge the British Empire her attitude would be very different towards an independent India if India were governed by a Hindu majority hostile to the numerically weaker Moslem population The issue is in fact blurred by the eternal Hindu-Moslem quarrel; inevitably if the Hindu extremist politician aims at separation from the British Empire he must make a lasting peace with the Moslems He claims that he can do this, but only when the British fade out of the Indian scene, which brings us into a vicious circle The unpleasant truth is that for an indefinite period the safety of the Frontier and the defence of India depend on the continuance of the British partnership

The policy outlined in the preceding paragraphs should attract support from political opinion in India with any pretension to balance It is a constructive policy, a policy that has for its objective political appeasement and economic betterment on the Frontier Moslems should approve of an attempt to introduce some form of responsible self-government in the tribes, to improve their moral and material condition, to bring them up to the level of civilization reached by their kinsmen in the settled districts A closer friendship with Afghanistan should have a similar appeal The Congress politician could hardly criticize a system which would extend the democracy he prizes so highly to the Frontier hills, he might even look forward to the ultimate alliance of a Congress government in Peshawar with a federation

of the tribal republics beyond the administrative border He would have to admit that it was a policy devised not in the interests of British Imperialism, but a policy of steady progress in the pacification of the border for the benefit of India He might grudge the expense, but that could be justified on the ground that it would ultimately be more than covered by the avoidance of an unending series of campaigns The strongest objections would probably be put forward by Hindu politicians of the orthodox school, to whom any kind of *rapprochement* with militant Islam in the north is unthinkable Yet even intransigent Hinduism might be influenced by the argument that with peace and economic and cultural progress on the Frontier and in Afghanistan the fanaticism of the fifteen million Afghans who now threaten India might be slowly but surely eliminated And would not its disappearance banish the dream of the border fighting man that one day the standard of Islam might again float proudly over the walls of Delhi? There would unquestionably be support from another quarter—the Indian Princes The Princes have had a long experience of practical statesmanship and may be expected to bring a degree of realism into Indian politics Their encouragement in the handling of a question such as Frontier policy would be of immense value and the British government may feel that it would be wise to await federation before making a new move on the Frontier The Princes will control a large number of votes in the Federal legislature, their support in alliance with some of the minority groups, Europeans, land-holders, Anglo-Indians and some at least of the Moslems should give the Govern-

ment the sound moral backing it would need for a reasonable policy in the borderland

The British government may have an opportunity in the near future of initiating a new policy in Waziristan, where as noted in the chapter discussing recent events in that country, stable conditions have still to be established It seems obvious enough that no lasting settlement can be made with the Mahsuds and Wazirs until tribal responsibility is restored on a sound basis It is suggested that Government might take the opportunity of explaining its policy to the tribesmen both in the settled districts and in tribal areas It would be made clear that Government would insist on some form of tribal authority capable of controlling the tribes , they would help in setting up such an authority on self-governing principles, and would give the tribal authority moral and material support , further they would promote economic development, and provide facilities for education and medical relief They had no desire to interfere with the freedom of the hills so long as the tribal authority could maintain order They hoped that ultimately Pathans of the hills would unite with the Pathans of the plains in a joint scheme of self-government Whether the time would be suitable for such an announcement when peace is restored in Waziristan is another matter As already observed it might be better to await federation

The Frontier problem looms large in the military commitments of Britain A solution cannot long be delayed British statesmen need the support of political India if this is to be accomplished, more particularly because the new Government of India

Act, reversing the Curzon policy of 1901, interposes a first-class government under a popular ministry, between the central government and the Frontier The great experiment in self-government that is being carried out in India places on Indians a share of the responsibility of finding a way out of the difficulty In facing the question Indian politicians both on the Frontier itself and at Delhi should be generous enough to stress lightly those aspects of Frontier administration in which the British have not been successful Rather let them place to the credit of Britain the immunity from invasion India has enjoyed for over a century, a record equalled only by the Moguls in the last thousand years Britain has paid the price of failure with the blood of thousands of her sons Nevertheless the foundations of a firm and lasting structure have been laid, let Indians help to complete the building It will rest with them to convince the Pathan that Delhi has more to offer him than Kabul

Chapter X

A SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

THE British came to India to trade; they took advantage of the dissensions among the Indian Princes to build up an empire and so make their position secure Once they had in this way appropriated the whole country their policy was, in essence, to keep the great Indian market for the British manufacturer

Criticism of this sort is common among the detractors of the British in India to-day There is an element of truth in it British policy in India has always embodied the principle, *quieta non movere*, British rulers recognized no obligation to promote the moral and cultural progress of the Indian peoples, it was no responsibility of theirs to take up the herculean task of welding the mosaic of races, castes, and religious sects into a homogeneous nation capable of standing alone in an unfriendly world To abolish or modify Hindu customs inconsistent with nationhood, caste, child-marriages, the outcast system, would probably have involved the re-conquest of India To attempt to bridge the gulf between Hindu and Moslem would have been a challenge to the impossible Indians must work out their own salvation and with it acquire a new political conscience That was the British attitude

The main object of the British government was to give the peoples of India an impartial and efficient administration, to ensure internal peace and security; to keep taxation at a minimum; to build up prosperity by constructing canals railways, roads, and by improving agriculture (The irrigated area is now 50 millions of acres, twice what it was in 1895,

system of administration in the settled districts was the widening of the breach between the Pathans of the plains and their kinsmen of the hills

The divergence was less apparent before the British occupation A more or less friendly *modus vivendi* prevailed, the two wings were not so unbalanced as they subsequently became The tribes of the plains had been free to retaliate in their own way, if affronted by men from the hills, raiding provoked counter-raiding, the Hindu banker or trader was comparatively safe under the protection of his patron Khans The position changed under the British régime The Hindu now renounced his client status, claimed equality with his protectors, a great empire was pledged to ensure his safety The result was that he became fair game for the border raider, as his wealth increased under the reign of law the temptation to exploit him grew, the more so as his natural protectors, the Pathans, whose dependant he had been, no longer felt responsible for him And so, at the outset, the British were faced with the difficult problem of keeping out transborder raiders from hundreds of villages easy of access from the hills The problem to-day is more difficult than ever

The British have been in diplomatic relations with Kabul for nearly a century and a half Unfortunately their treatment of the Afghans in the early stages did not stimulate friendship They expected much and were ready to give little, if anything, in return Unaided with subsidies or munitions of war, was it likely that Shah Shuja could have resisted even for a short period a Franco-Russian invasion in 1809? Again,

if the British wanted a strong buffer State in the North-West why did they not use diplomacy to prevent Maharaja Ranjit Singh from seizing the Indus valley provinces of the Kabul ruler? Far from adopting a conciliatory attitude they allowed their pensioner, Shah Shuja, to attack Dost Muhammed, the strong and popular Amir of the day, thereby, presumably without intending it, facilitating the seizure of Peshawar by the Sikhs, while Dost Muhammed was opposing the pretender Is it surprising that when, a few years later, they sought an alliance with the Kabul ruler against Russia, they were told that the price of friendship was that they should induce Ranjit Singh to evacuate Peshawar? The blank refusal of Kabul led to the crazy war of 1839, a three years' occupation of Kabul by British forces, and the worst disaster ever suffered by British armies in the East

Six or seven years later the British took over the borderland from the Sikhs Dost Muhammed had re-established himself firmly in Kabul, here was an opportunity of attempting a consortium with him with the object of pacifying the border tribes The British left him severely alone The border tribes were nobody's children, except when it suited Dost Muhammed to incite them against the British

The Afghan War of 1878–81 did not improve the position It is strange that by this time the British had not realized the necessity of a strategic frontier that would have enabled them to dominate the border tribes and attempt a measure of control, possibly by establishing some form of indirect tribal government They could have had whatever frontier they

wanted At this period the tribes were armed almost entirely with obsolete weapons, mostly matchlocks or flintlocks; a line of frontier posts that would have prevented the smuggling of arms from Europe or from Kabul through Afghanistan would have meant that the tribes would never again have been able to oppose troops armed with the latest weapons Disarmament would have been comparatively easy The frontier problem would have been solved in the 'eighties A pity that the opportunity was allowed to slip by.

The frontier obtained in '94 (the Durand line) was in many respects far from what military and political considerations required Even so it was more or less extorted. One could hardly expect Kabul not to resent being deprived of the best fighting material on the border, it emphasized the bitter feeling of the loss of Afghanistan *irredenta* from the foothills to the Indus, the Amir had not forgotten or forgiven the British for excluding the Afghans from the sea when they induced his feudatory, the Khan of Kelat, to transfer his allegiance to India Can we wonder that with such grievances against his mighty neighbour the Amir should have endeavoured by means of allowances and presents of arms to keep up a strong Kabul party among the tribes whom the Durand line had, as he thought, severed from his kingdom?

Were the British wrong at this stage to deny representation at St James to Amir Abdurrahman? Association with London might have helped to break down Afghan exclusiveness, to soften the spirit of fanaticism in border psychology

No efforts were made to evolve order out of the chaos of tribal life The tribes were left very much to themselves Allowances were paid, usually in return for some kind of service, e g for protecting roads, or in compensation for some claim relinquished in favour of Government, such as the levy of tolls on trade Some three or four thousand tribesmen were enlisted in irregular corps, maintained for holding the routes into the tribal hinterland, linking up strategic posts

Between '94 and the War there was a series of tribal expeditions In 1908 Lord Morley refused to take the opportunity of occupying the Bazar valley in Tirah Had this been done some form of control over the whole of Tirah would have been the almost inevitable consequence A bold stroke of policy of the kind at this time might have proved the thin end of the wedge in settling the frontier problem

Despite the dislike of Kabul for British policy Amir Habibullah remained loyal to his pledges during the War Had he unleashed a *jihad* the British might have been hard put to it to hold India His son, more ambitious and dreaming of the conquest of Delhi, sent round the fiery cross Most of the tribes on the British side of the line answered the call Their movements were, however, badly co-ordinated, the Afghans showed no generalship , the invasion was easily repelled Wide-spread punitive expeditions followed against the insurgent tribes, the fighting being especially severe in Waziristan Here a bold policy was initiated , a semi-circular road was driven through into the tribal area , a strong cantonment established on the Razmak plateau dominating the

country, Wana was reoccupied Large bodies of tribal levies were raised for protecting the roads No effort was, however, made to set up a tribal government, tribal responsibility, the key of frontier political administration, was allowed to fade into the background The recent breakdown of the new system is largely due to this outstanding defect

The almost continuous unrest on the border after the War had created an unending series of difficulties for the Frontier administrator They might have been smoothed out had not the Frontier been drawn into the vortex of Indian politics The Simon Commission thought it impossible to establish self-government in the border marches, the closest co-operation between the military, civil and political authorities was, they considered, essential, this might not be possible with the administration in the hands of a popular ministry antagonistic to British policy The Frontier politician however would not be denied, the North-West Frontier must come into line with the Indian provinces Government hesitated, the Indian Congress saw its opportunity and working with the local organization known as the Red Shirts, led by Khan Abdul Ghafar, started a raging campaign of vituperation and hate against British rule along the whole length of the border and beyond it They were given a free hand, nothing must be allowed to obstruct the inevitable march of democracy!

The results were startling For the first time during British rule the Frontier capital was attacked and besieged by a tribal *lashkar*, the Red Shirts at one time had established what almost amounted to a parallel government, there were clashes between

Government troops and Pathan villagers of the settled districts, the repercussions of political agitation in tribal territory were undoubtedly a contributory factor in the subsequent risings in Waziristan and Mohmand country The Pathan has always disliked British rule, till Indian politics permeated the borderland he had at least respected it The feeling that the British government had given way, not to force, but simply (as it appeared to Pathans discussing strange happenings in their village clubs) to the vituperations of the Hindu politician, the despised idol-worshipper, was a knock-out blow to British prestige, and accounts for much of the trouble of the past ten years

The history of British border administration is strewn with lost opportunities Several have been noted already Another was allowed to slip by at this juncture The Afridis had made an unprovoked attack on Peshawar, the only penalty exacted was the seizure of the Khajurai plain along the foothills from the Bara southwards, what should have been done was to insist on the military occupation of the Bazar valley Such an action would have inspired respect, it would have made difficult the scotching by Red Shirt and Congress agitators of the project of a road through the heart of Tirah to Kohat to which the Afridi elders had agreed The object lesson would not have been lost on other tribes It is regretable that in 1935 after an expensive campaign another opportunity of improving the military position on the Peshawar border by driving a road through Mohmand country and Bajaur was neglected.

Then came the elections to the new Frontier Assembly Congress and Red Shirts worked together; the wildest promises were made to unsophisticated villagers, "Vote for Congress and British rule would be replaced by a benign government of their own which would find land for everyone and levy no taxation." The promise of a new Utopia brought it about that Pathans wearing the Congress label were the strongest party (19 out of 50), with the help of a few Hindus and Independents a Congress ministry was formed The event was as unfortunate as it was unexpected With a party in power professedly hostile to the British government it would be more difficult than ever to deal with the serious unrest on the southern border Had it been a friendly government as in the Panjab, which might have been the case had Congress been excluded at the outset, it would have been possible to utilise its influence in the tribal hinterland in order to induce the Pathans of the hills to accept some method of self-government under the aegis of Britain As things are, public opinion in the province, especially on the Wazir border, is very much in favour of the insurgents

The military unpreparedness of India, aggravated as it was by the persistent unrest in Waziristan, must have added greatly to the anxiety of the Imperial General Staff during the resent crisis As in 1914, India would have been best defended by employing a large proportion of her armed forces at a distance from her shores In this way at least 50,000 men would almost certainly have been required overseas immediately, for Hong Kong, Singapore, Aden, for Egypt and Palestine if the Mediterranean had been

closed. The Hindu Congress was governing 8 of the 11 Indian provinces, it was its declared policy to deny assistance of every kind to Britain, should she be involved in an imperialistic war If a similar policy were adopted by the Frontier government the result might be a widespread border rising, probably involving some of the tribes in the settled districts If this should occur half the Indian Army at least would be required to meet the danger It might in such an emergency be impossible to spare troops to strengthen the outlying defences of India

The Panjab, the sword-arm of India, the recruiting ground of two-thirds of her armies, was the key to the military position Most of the eighty millions of Moslems in India would follow the Panjab lead If it stood firmly behind Britain the danger from the Frontier would be minimised, Congress would not venture to commit itself by active demonstrations of hostility

Then just as catastrophe seemed inevitable the clouds lifted Without delay or hesitation the Panjab through its political leaders declared itself solidly on the side of the British, the Indian Princes vied with each other in offers of service, the friendship of Kabul would count for much with the tribes, there was little doubt that that loyal ally of Britain, Nepal, would stand by her in her hour of trial, would mobilize, if required, 50,000 Gurkhas to help defend India India would be able to fulfil her imperial obligations

The Frontier is the Achilles heel of India, perhaps of the empire itself Now that the crisis is past the question of the defence of India is to be seriously

considered An expert committee presided over by Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield has been appointed to advise the Indian and Imperial governments on the best methods to adopt Meanwhile the British government has recognized that the defence of India is an Imperial problem by offering India a contribution of five millions sterling towards the cost of mechanizing the army and an annual contribution of two millions sterling

The question of the defence of the Frontier will inevitably be one of the major issues before the Committee It is covered by one of the terms of reference which requires the Committee to report whether the resources available for military expenditure are spent to the best advantage Obviously the millions applied to holding down the Frontier tribes are not so spent Invested on increasing the Air Force they would give far better value, if only the Frontier problem could be solved The British Government has a right to insist that a policy with that end in view should be framed at the earliest opportunity The groping, tentative policy that lies behind the political administration of the border to-day holds no hope of giving reality to the Durand line as an Imperial frontier That can only be achieved by inspiring in the tribal mind the conviction that its political destiny lies with Delhi and not with Kabul

How can this be accomplished? It is a problem which the best and ablest leaders of political opinion of all shades in India must help to solve, the Princes should be called in to council The problem could best be handled by a strong federal government,

but that might mean considerable delay, and delay is dangerous

It seems unlikely that the Hindu Congress, the strongest political party in India will be inclined to co-operate Nothing has shown more conclusively the divorce between Indian politics and reality than the attitude of Congress towards the Frontier and defence generally. Can their assertion that the Frontier problem is a mere fiction, created by the British in order to justify the large British garrisons and the command of the Indian Army by British officers be described as anything but puerile? Do Mr Gandhi and his lieutenants really believe that in recruiting an unbalanced fanatic like Abdul Ghafar the then Frontier leader they were converting the Pathans of the Frontier to the creed of non-violence? Are they satisfied that the Congress government at Peshawar sympathises with their object of breaking away from the British empire and governing India by majority rule, which means Hindu rule? If they think so they would be unpleasantly disillusioned if the British should take them at their word and leave them to themselves. For there can be nothing more certain than that the Frontier Pathan will not renounce the hope of looting India in exchange for a few seats in a Delhi parliament where his voice would not be heard in the babel of an overwhelming Hindu majority. Home rule for India would mean Home rule for the Frontier. The appeal of Afghan nationalism would prove irresistible and ultimately the Iron Province would be reunited with Kabul. And rather than be dominated by a Brahmin-ridden government the Indian Pathan and

Sindh would be drawn into the orbit of Kabul, so too would Kashmir The Muslim menace which for 700 years before the British came had disturbed the peace of India would be created afresh, perhaps with disastrous consequences Britain alone stands between Hinduism and this ever present danger

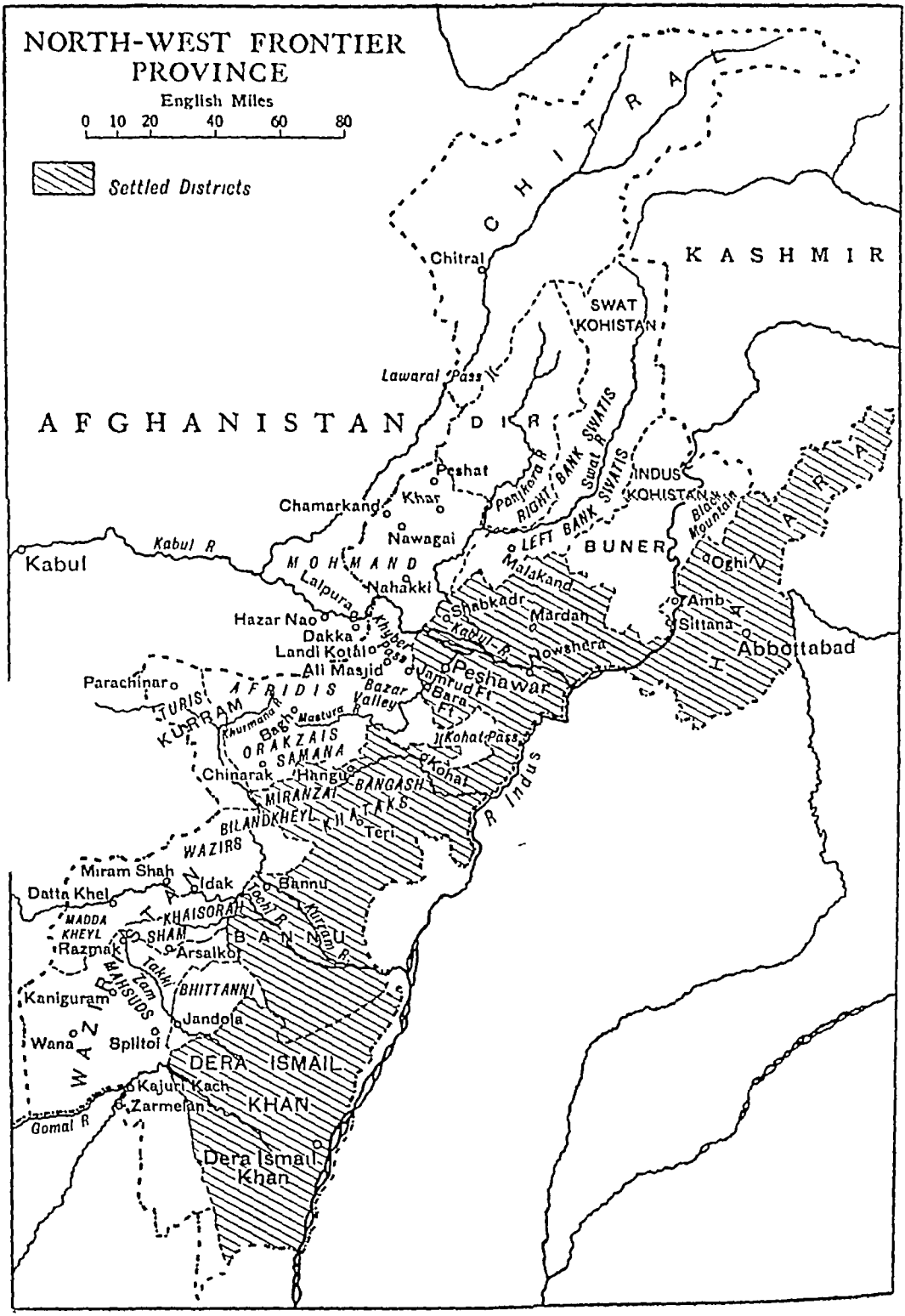
The friendship and co-operation of Afghanistan are essential factors in the pacification of the borderland An inscrutable decree of Providence has brought Briton and Afghan into contact for over a hundred years They need each other's support Afghanistan alone could not prevail against Russia With British military power behind her she can feel secure Afghan friendship is with the British Empire, not with India alone A Hindu government of India, with Britain eliminated, would not give the Afghans the support they require

Hindus, afraid of their secular enemies, the Moslems of the Central Asian highlands, would prefer to see Afghanistan weak What Britain wants on the other hand is a strong Afghanistan civilized, economically and culturally developed, between which and a self-governing Frontier Province working in harmony with the British political authorities the tribes of the mountain hinterland would have no option but to throw aside their intransigence and take on the responsibilities of citizenship

Will Hindu India realize that only with British co-operation can the problem of the Afghan Frontier be finally solved? Britain has not yet exhausted her mission in the borderland And fortunately for her and for India the romance of the Frontier still attracts the best of her manhood, the hope of border service

is an added inducement to a military career in India Kipling's poem on border life still rings true, though the border sniper of to-day uses a more expensive weapon

> A scrimmage in a border station—
> A canter down some dark defile—
> Two thousand pounds of education
> Drops to a ten-rupee jezail


NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE
English Miles
0 10 20 40 60 80
Settled Districts
CHITRAL
KASHMIR
Chitral
SWAT KOHISTAN
Lawarai Pass
AFGHANISTAN
DIR
Peshat
Panjkora R
RIGHT BANK SWATIS
Swat R
LEFT BANK SWATIS
INDUS KOHISTAN
Black Mountain
HAZARA
Chamarkand
Khar
Nawagai
BUNER
Kabul R
Kabul
MOHMAND
Lalpura
Nahakki
Malakand
Shabkadr
Mardan
Oghi
Amb
Sittana
Abbottabad
Hazar Nao
Dakka
Khyber Pass
Kabul R
Landi Kotal
Ali Masjid
Jamrud Ft
Peshawar
Bara Ft
Parachinar
JURIS
KURRAM
AFRIDIS
Bazar Valley
Khurmana R
Mastura R
Bagh
ORAKZAIS
SAMANA
Kohat Pass
Chinarak
Hangu
Kohat
BANGASH
MIRANZAI
TAKS
Teri
R Indus
BILANDKHEYL
WAZIRS
Miram Shah
Idak
Bannu
Datta Khel
Tochi R
Kurram R
MADDA KHEYL
KHAISORAH
SHAM
BANNU
Razmak
Arsalkot
Takki Zam
WAHSUDS
BHITTANNI
Kaniguram
Jandola
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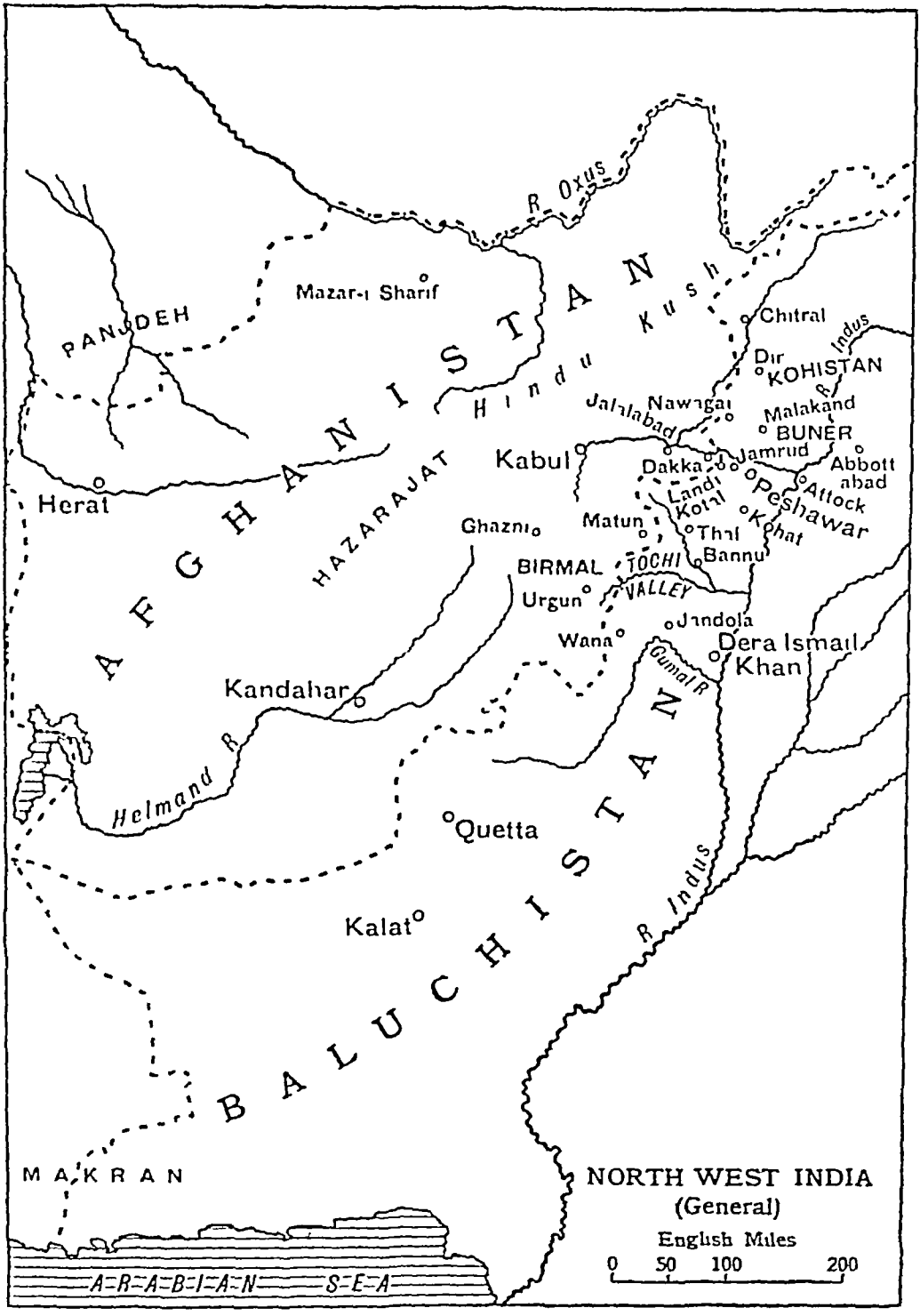
Spilto
WAZIRISTAN
DERA ISMAIL KHAN
Kajuri Kach
Zarmelan
Gomal R
Dera Ismail Khan


R. Oxus
Mazar-i Sharif
PANJDEH
AFGHANISTAN
Hindu Kush
Chitral
Dir
KOHISTAN
R. Indus
Jalalabad
Nawagai
Malakand
BUNER
Kabul
Dakka
Jamrud
Abbottabad
Attock
Peshawar
Landi Kotal
Khat
Herat
HAZARAJAT
Ghazni
Matun
Thal
Bannu
BIRMAL
TOCHI
VALLEY
Urgun
Jandola
Wana
Dera Ismail Khan
Gumal R.
Kandahar
Helmand R.
Quetta
BALUCHISTAN
Kalat
R. Indus
MAKRAN
ARABIAN SEA
NORTH WEST INDIA
(General)
English Miles
0 50 100 200

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